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DUNGEON TRACTS

CAMPAIGN CLASSICS: BEYOND THE WORLD SERPENT INN

GREYHAWK · DARK SUN · AL-QADIM · KARA-TUR · FORGOTTEN REALMS · EBERRON

30 YEARS OF DRAGON

Dragon®

ISSUE 351 · JANUARY 2007

THE MANY WORLDS OF DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

7 CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

1 VERY SPECIAL TAVERN

INTRODUCING NEW MONTHLY FORGOTTEN REALMS AND EBERRON COLUMNS

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DarcKnyght

ECOLOGY OF THE ISLE OF DREAD

ISSUE 351 JANUARY 2007

Dragon

VOL. XXXI NUMBER 8

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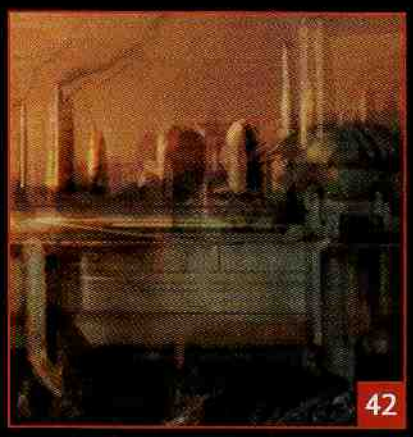

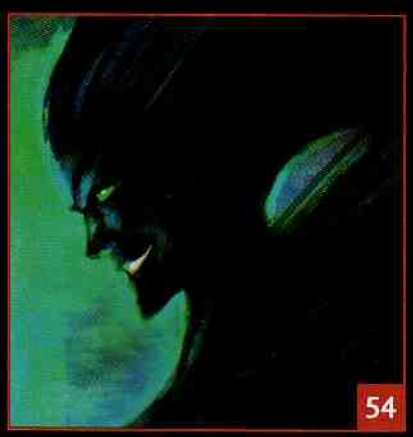

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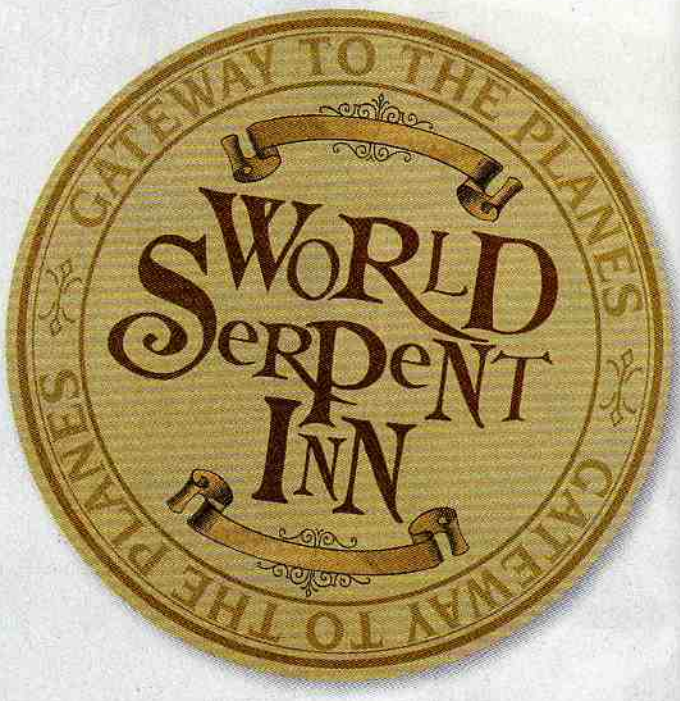


When I came to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS in the early 1980s, a DM's home world was situated in the Prime Material Plane, with the implication that other, "alternate" Primes existed, and that these housed the campaigns of other DUNGEONS & DRAGONS players. Second edition D&D took this a step further, unifying all of the Primes together into a single Prime Material Plane, with individual campaign worlds existing in the "Wildspace" of the then-new SPELLJAMMER campaign setting. A few years later, PLANESCAPE was the newest campaign setting, placing its action on the so-called "Great Wheel" cosmology that has defined D&D's multiverse from the game's earliest days. As D&D headed into the early 1990s, a strong sense developed that all D&D campaigns were set in the same over-arching "world," even if they were very, very far apart.

These days, the game has moved away from this harmony somewhat, with EBERRON sporting an entirely new cosmology and the FORGOTTEN REALMS—somewhat suddenly—developing a new set of planar realities that, um, have "always existed," despite decades of earlier product to the contrary. The philosophy makes a certain amount of sense. Most players need only one world, after all, so what exists beyond the sky and earth doesn't really matter, and what exists on other skies and other earths matters even less. The planar cosmology must serve the DM's campaign world first, and if it makes more sense (or if it seems more fun) to have a completely new take on the planes for a given campaign world, go for it.

I am sympathetic to this argument, even if I don't really agree with it. While the individual campaign setting may gain luster, something of the whole is lost. There is certain community of peers in a cosmology that can encapsulate all D&D players and campaigns, a certain sense of belonging inherent to the pre-third edition make up of the multiverse. But let us not cry over a spilled *potion of cure light wounds*. Despite their newfound isolation, EBERRON and the FORGOTTEN REALMS remain connected to the Great Wheel through the transitive Plane of Shadow, a novel tie that allows everyone to have their *hero's feast* and eat it too. Even a decade ago, when TSR published a comic book featuring spelljamming trips to a variety of official D&D worlds, some realms remained more isolated than others. RAVENLOFT, the Demiplane of Dread, was nearly impossible to escape, and more often came to you than you to it. Athas, the cruel world of the DARK SUN campaign setting, was isolated in a "sealed" crystal sphere, which is a fancy second edition D&D way of saying "you pretty much can't get there." But there were clearly exceptions to these rules. Lots of players (and even a few dark lords) managed to escape RAVENLOFT. The gith of Athas had to come from somewhere.

For more than a decade, *DRAGON* has offered glimpses into the many worlds of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS in its Campaign Classics articles. Two years ago, we decided to take things a step further by introducing an annual Campaign Classics issue, with the magazine in your hands representing our third such effort. With so few pages to dedicate to each campaign setting, we've had to put considerable thought into how to make the articles useful to the largest number of readers. Not everyone wants to introduce plane-hopping or magic space boats into their campaigns, after all, and a 6-page article is hardly long enough to kick off a full-scale campaign set in a new world. Thus we fell upon the idea of a framing device that would allow players to easily explore these fascinating worlds without putting too much stress on a "regular" D&D campaign.

The solution was obvious, not least because it had been done before. The little-remembered *OP1: Tales from the Outer Planes* super-adventure faced the same problem with a novel solution, a magical inn that was simultaneously connected to all planes and worlds. We've dusted off the idea—and a lot of other good old ones—for this issue, and we hope your first visit to the World Serpent Inn won't be your last.

See you on another world.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief
erikm@paizo.com

SCALE MAIL

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com.** Please include your name, city, and state.

PRAISE FOR #348

Another enjoyable issue, ladies and gentlemen. From the very Halloween-y cover (oh, dear old Vecna, always looking for a hand up) to a nice variety of articles inside, you've guaranteed I'll be back again next month. Random thoughts:

It is with great shame that I admit that I have never played a game in the RAVENLOFT world, not even back in the "Alleged Day." It doth intrigue me with its spookiness and fangs.

Always nice to read the dark genius that is Sean K Reynolds, and his "Core Beliefs" article on Vecna did not disappoint. Can Sean do cuddly? Is it possible? Is a "Core Beliefs" of the Smurfs in the offing? I challenge thee, Master Reynolds, trademarks be damned.

The fiction question: I'm down for more fiction, if it's interesting. I don't want to read about another dungeon raid or encounter with a fell beast. I'd like some smaller stories set with characters just living in the world of EBERRON or GREYHAWK. Some color to breathe some life into these worlds outside of the monsters, dire threats from beyond, and cursed treasure. Some "fifth business" in the D&D world would be interesting.

Requests? Less stats, more color. I thought there was a nice balance of this in Nicholas Herold's "Horrors of the Daelkyr." As for covers, I prefer the more classic D&D look, as evidenced in this issue. Nice to see some atmospheric monsters, but nicer still are the elf maidens and other curvaceous heroines. The cover of DRAGON #285 still needs to be unseated as Best Cover Ever, by the way.

Sean Twist
London, Ontario

I'm afraid a "Core Beliefs: Smurfs" installment is unlikely, not least because the xvart god Raxivort, a little blue runt, didn't quite make the cut from the GREYHAWK Pantheon to the Core Pantheon that serves as the basis for the series.

While Larry Elmore's cover to DRAGON #285 (affectionately nicknamed "Halfling Pole Dancer" by the staff) is surely among the best of that year, I regret to inform you that it is not only not the Best Cover Ever, but it is not even the Best Larry Elmore Cover Ever. Don't believe me? See for yourself in Paizo's lastest hardcover release, The Art of DRAGON: 30 Years of the World's Greatest Fantasy Art, *a 160-page compilation of some of the finest fantasy masterpieces ever to appear on the cover or interior of this magazine. We evaluated the entire archive to put together this volume, and the final result is absolutely astonishing. Works by Larry Elmore, Clyde Caldwell, Daniel Horne, Brom, Wayne Reynolds, Todd Lockwood, and many more comprise a "who's who" gallery of fantasy masterworks you won't want to miss. Look for it at quality book and game stores, or pick it up online at* ***paizo.com.***

MORE LOVIN' FOR #348

I picked up issue #348 last week and have to say I am much pleased.

In a previous letter of mine, which was printed in issue #345 (I've gotta say it was thrill to see my name in print in DRAGON), I said that I always look forward to the April/April Fool's issue and the October/Halloween issue of DRAGON.

Here's what I like: it was a good issue of DRAGON (lots of useful, nifty gaming content) and at the same time a good Halloween issue of DRAGON (lots of scary, useful, nifty gaming content).

In the past, I wondered when Core Beliefs would start bringing on the bad guys. "Core Beliefs: Vecna" was an excellent start to what I hope is a continuing trend: fleshing out the bad guy groups in detail as rich as they deserve. I loved it.

"Bestowed Curses" was a nifty little goody. The existing effects in the rulebooks for curses feel more than

a little dry. This added some much needed flavor.

"Bloodlines" was nice. No DM has enough monsters, and three new vampire templates are a welcome addition.

As for "Horrors of the Daelkyr," I don't really know much about EBERRON, so much of the specific details of the flavor was lost on me, but I have to say: What DM can't use six new ugly monsters?

"Ecology of the Wight" was another excellent entry in the ecology series, but if you're going to mention the real world history of the wight and the saga of Grettir the Strong, then perhaps you might mention the article in issue #210 or #198 (I can't remember off the top of my head) that contained D&D stats for that sort of wight.

One thing I miss from the old days is the just about annual inclusion of a *Call of Cthulhu* article in October. I remember particularly the ones in #198, #210, and #222, mostly because they were from around when I started reading DRAGON regularly.

Justin Taylor
Walker, MI

If Cthulhu is on your mind, I hope last month's Demonomicon hit the spot with its focus on Dagon, a demon heavily inspired by H.P. Lovecraft's demented writings. That wight you were looking for is in issue #198, by the way. Thanks for the kind comments. It's always fun to take on one of DRAGON's annual themes, and this issue's "Campaign Classics" is no exception! Please write in again and let us know what you think.

FR-TASTIC

Thanks Ed Bonny, Brian Cortijo, and Lazlo Koller for writing up the Endless Waste article in issue #349. Ramón Pérez and Eric Deschamps put a nice feel to the article with the art, and Rob Lazzaretti did a GREAT job with the map. I'm so happy about that. I'm also happy to see that Erik and all the DRAGON staff really listened to us when we asked for articles on places outside of the main continent. I like the idea of more information on places further away from Faerûn. I liked it even better when you all wrote at the present time, with some current history to help out some of us.

Darkmeer
Via Email

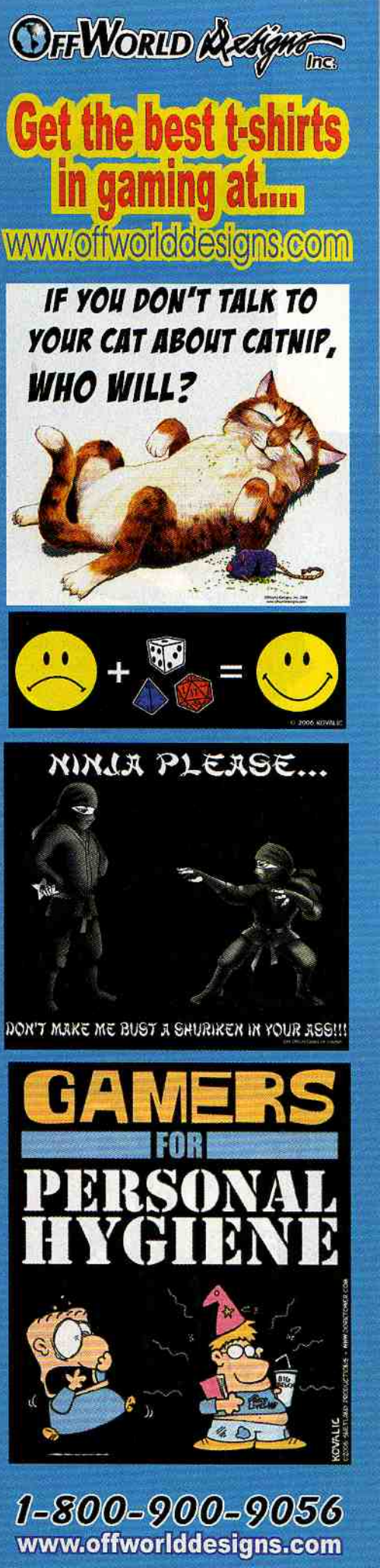
No problem, Darkmeer! Here's hoping that this issue's look at KARA-TUR and AL-QADIM hit the spot for off-map FORGOTTEN REALMS regions. Sorry we couldn't get to Maztica or the non-canonical continent from the Double-Diamond Triangle novels this time around, but we only have so many pages!

FR-RIFFIC

Well, I have to say I am impressed. I have been a long time (okay at least for me) player and reader of D&D material and the FORGOTTEN REALMS in general. Big fan of the Realms, I have to say I love the recent increase in interesting material. I liked it so much that I decided to get a subscription to DRAGON. So I hope you keep it up and continue to produce quality material. I loved the Impiltur article by George Krashos, as well as the Hordelands article, and the web supplement, which I have to say, was very awesome! I am looking forward to the Legacies of the Ancients as well. Hope that it lives up to the hype, but then Eric L. Boyd does a pretty good job. I have to say the feedback on the Candlekeep Forum, as well as the Wizards of the Coast boards, seems to be pretty favorable so far for your new FR articles. Keep up the good job.

Kevin Romine
Emporia, Ks

We'll keep printing quality FORGOTTEN REALMS articles so long as dedicated fans keep sending them our way. This issue kicks off "Volo's Guide to the FORGOTTEN REALMS," a new monthly series of short articles with introductions by Ed Greenwood and ideas from some of our favorite authors. At this rate, the Realms won't be forgotten for long! —Erik Mona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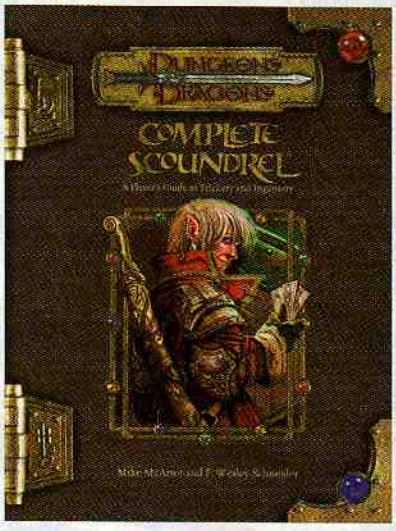
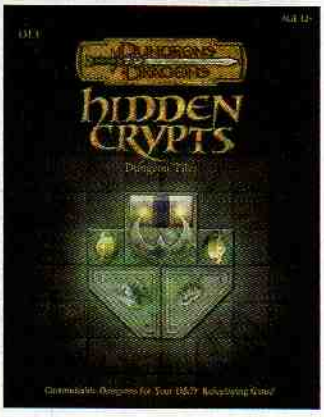


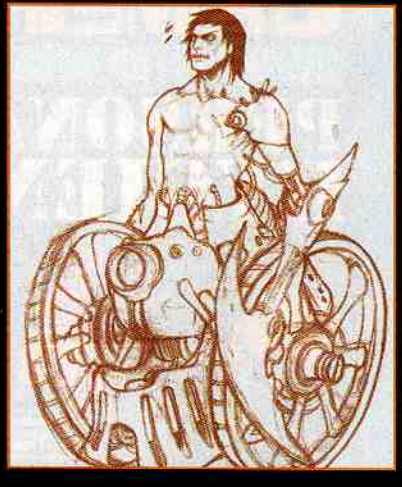
Complete Scoundrel teaches your character how to lie, cheat, and steal with the best of them. Written by *Dragon* associate editors Mike McArtor and F. Wesley Schneider, this companion to last October's *Complete Mage* gives tricky characters a host of new tools, from the typical prestige classes and spells to more unusual fare. The biggest innovation is the trick mechanic. Based on skill points, it provides rules for movielike effects, like sliding down banisters, dropping chandeliers, and drawing hidden blades. The more tricks you take, the more options you have for using them. Finally, you can watch your favorite fantasy movies and say, "My character can do that!"

Following in the Colossal footsteps of the Red Dragon (not-so-) miniature comes the newest D&D Icon, the Gargantuan Blue Dragon. The figure runs 16 inches from the point of its horn to the tip of its tail and stands 6 inches tall. Miniatures Developer Steve Schubert says, "It's down on all fours, so it really looks like it's about to bite someone's torso off; it's more of a stalking pose with wings out to the side and spread." The blue beastie also comes with a stat card, two new combat scenarios, and an Egyptian-themed desert map designed by Jason Engle.



Speaking of maps, also releasing this month comes *Dungeon Tiles Set 3: Hidden Crypts*, a collection of 2-D tomb and catacomb features, along with a number of other bits of dungeon decor, perfect for depicting or inspiring your next delve.

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON #352



The World of China Mieville
by Wolfgang Baur
Explore the intriguing and fantastical world of China Miéville with an interview with the author himself and in-depth D&D conversions pulled right from the pages of *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar*, and *The Iron Council*.

Bas Lag Gazetteer
Travel from the city-state of New Crobuzon to the mysterious lands of High Cromlech, from the ship-city of Armada to the deadly Gengris in this expansive gazetteer.

The People of Bas Lag
Four new player races, including the cactacae, khepri, vodyanoi, and the tortured remade.

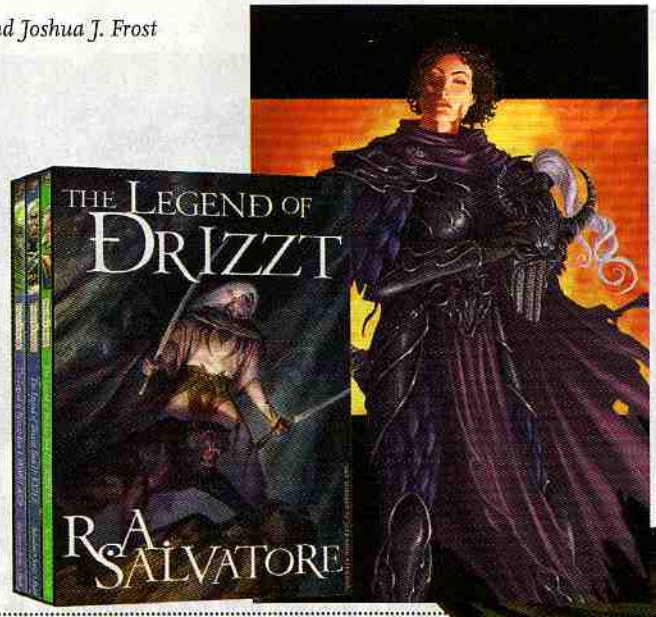
Monsters of New Crobuzon
From the deadly slake moth to the incomprehensible weaver, this bestiary reveals eight new monsters of Bas Lag.

Plus!
The Ecology of the Yrthak, Volo's Guide, Dragonmarks, Class Acts, First Watch, Savage Tidings, comics—including the Order of the Stick—and more!

reported by Shelly Baur, William Christensen, Mike L. Fiegel, and Joshua J. Frost

GETTING GRAPHIC

Devil's Due Publishing (**devilsdue.net**) has more in store for fantasy fans this month, releasing several new graphic novel adaptations of popular fantasy and D&D stories. Of particular note, the *Forgotten Realms: Legend of Drizzt* box set features a new cover by artist Todd Lockwood, and includes the original graphic novel adaptations of R.A. Salvatore's *Homeland*, *Exile*, and *Sojourn* novels. And if that's not enough Salvatore in graphic form, look for the first of three installments of *The Demon Awakens*, book one of the *Demon Wars* series. Also releasing this month is the last installment of *Dragons of Winter Night*, the second book in Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman's classic *Dragonlance Chronicles* saga.



D&D ONLINE UPDATE

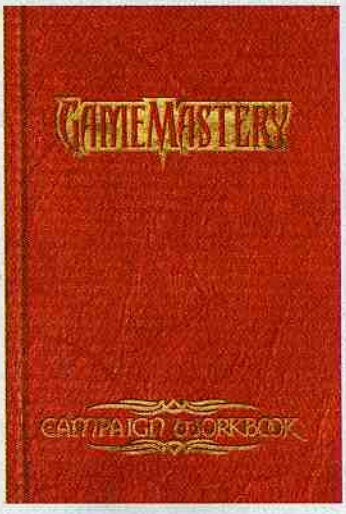
Dungeons & Dragons Online (**ddo.com**) has come a long way since its release last January and continues to evolve. The most recent expansion, *Curse of the Demon Sands*, introduces many additions to the game. "One of the things we wanted to focus on particularly with *Demon Sands* was giving players an [outdoor landscape] area to begin to explore," said James Jones, executive producer of *DDO*. *Curse of the Demon Sands* also introduces two types of player-versus-player modes and an increase in the maximum level from 10th to 12th. "We're also very interested in implementing prestige classes, adding the rest of the races and classes from the *Player's Handbook*, and we're looking into adding the Eberron races and classes as well."

Also of note, starting with *Demon Sands* players can expect to see dragons flying over the city of Stormreach. This comes as a prelude to module four, which, James hints, is "going to be based around battling three rogue dragons and a giant we call the Stormreaver."

MASTERWORK ITEMS

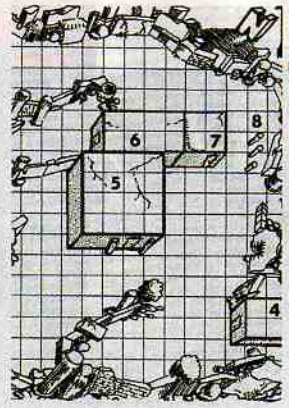
GameMastery Campaign Workbook, a leatherette-bound journal designed to handle an entire campaign's planning needs, releases from Paizo Publishing (**paizo.com**) this month. It features a calendar, map templates, character registries and over one hundred sheets of graph paper. "The most important thing about this product is that it's truly portable," said Joshua Frost, Paizo Marketing Director. "The book fits in your back pocket."

Also new is the *Item Pack: Adventure Gear* deck, which allows players to track equipment with fifty-four non-random item cards covering everything from caltrops to the ubiquitous 10-foot pole. "Our message boards give us a wonderful venue to share ideas with our customers," said CEO Lisa Stevens about the fan-requested product. "*Adventure Gear* is one result that we are really excited about."



A WORLD GONE MAD

The stars must be right, as there's two new games based on H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. Steve Jackson Games (**sjgames.com**) adds *Munchkin Cthulhu* to its popular *Munchkin* line, a stand-alone game that can be combined with the other titles in the series. Meanwhile, Toyvault (**toyvault.com**) releases *Do You Worship Cthulhu?*, a game designed for five to thirty players. Some players assume the roles of Cthulhu-worshiping cultists bent on sacrifice, while others play villagers set on lynching those they believe are responsible for the grisly acts. It's a game of lies and deception, Cthulhu style.



ENDLESS INSPIRATION

Here's an idea so simple it's genius. *PDF Pad* (**pdfpad.com**) has almost everything you need to make a good map. The barebones website allows users to quickly download various types of printable graph paper in PDF format. Choose from Cartesian (standard squares), isometric, hexagonal, and other types of graph paper. Each type offers several customizable sizes so that you can make your maps exactly as you envision them. The website also provides a handy reference for calendars from any year, world flags, and other useful graphing and mapping tools.

AVAST MATEY!

Just in time to set sail with DUNGEON's Savage Tide Adventure Path, the buccaneers over at Mega Miniatures have put a whole armada of piratically-themed set pieces to sea. Both the three-part *Boats & Quay* set and the two-piece *Raft and Escape Boat* set give you everything you need to send a raiding party out to pillage, while the detailed pirates' hideout gives scalawags a place to drop anchor. The set of twenty-four *Townsfolk* even comes with a number of appropriately scurvy-looking prospects for sea-faring characters. You can plunder Mega Miniatures' entire catalog right over at **megaminis.com.**

WHAT BIG EYES YOU

The popular Japanese anime and manga-inspired RPG, *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* returns, now under the aegis of White Wolf's Arthaus studio (**white-wolf.com/arthaus**). Formerly released by Guardians of Order, Arthaus's incarnation features an expanded and easier to use version of the game's classic Tri-Stat system, promising more options without sacrificing ease of playability, and the flexibility to create a wider range of characters. Being the new custodians of this popular line, Arthaus assures fans that it is committed to retaining the rules and feel that *BESM* fans have come to love.

THIS MONTH IN DUNGEON #142

Masque of Dreams

by B. Matthew Conklin III

A masquerade ball turns tragic when the party is crashed by goblin minions of a priestess of Zargon. Can the PCs rescue the kidnapped guests before they vanish into the desert, the latest victims of the Lost City of the Valley of Death? A D&D adventure for 1st-level characters.

Here There Be Monsters

by Jason Bulmahn

Shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread, the PCs must escort a band of ragged castaways through monster-infested jungles, gargoyle-haunted cliffs, and dangerous underground passes in order to reach the safety promised by the colony of Farshore. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 7th-level characters.

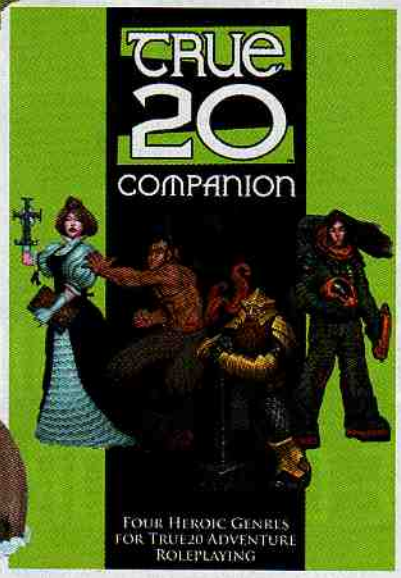
Bright Mountain King

by Caine Chandler

A nefarious villain's plan to ruin a dwarven nation's economy draws the PCs into the perilous depths of an ancient dwarven tomb. Yet does achieving their goal in the tomb only play into their enemy's hands? A D&D adventure for 16th-level characters.

FALL OF THE DRAGON KINGDOM

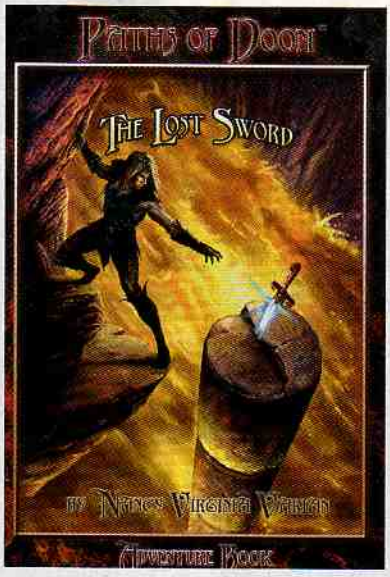
McFarlane Toys is at it again with *Dragons V: The Fall of the Dragon Kingdom*, the fifth set in its ongoing *Dragons* series. Each of the figures is hand painted and 6 inches tall (making them perfect for use as D&D dragon miniatures). Of particular interest to D&D players, the set's water dragon makes for an excellent black dragon, the komodo dragon for a demonic-looking blue dragon, and the berserker dragon makes an excellent green (albeit a chained one). Check out **spawn.com** for an extensive preview of the new set and a look at the past *Dragons* series and special figures.



DREAD AND D20S

Green Ronin (**greenronin.com**) is bringing adventure out of the wilderness and onto your home turf. *A Dreadful Dawn*, the fourth title in the *Bleeding Edge* series features a modern clash against a band of cultists who set up shop a little too close to the tap. It's up to the adventurers to thwart their mission before the sun rises (or before last call, if possible).

Also, the *True20 Companion* offers a plethora of tips on world-creation and campaign customization. This rulebook—designed for both Game Masters and players—features advice and information on adapting the True20 System to various genres, customizing heroic roles, and adding your own.



PATHS OF DOOM

In the tradition of the ever-popular *Choose Your Own Adventure* series, Margaret Weis Productions Ltd. (**margaretweis.com**) has created the *Paths of Doom* line, where the reader chooses the story's path. "The reason for the name is because there is only one 'good' ending. All of the rest range from 'wow, that kind of sucks' to horrible deaths," said Managing Editor Sean Everette. *Sete Ka's Dream Quest* and *The Lost Sword* have already been released, while the next two titles, *The Time Curse* and *Realm of the Enchanter*, release this month. The books are available at both book stores and hobby stores, and in PDF versions online at **RPGnow.com**.

RPGA REPORT *by Ian Richards*

Taking a break from hectic preparations for the 2006 Worldwide D&D Game Day and Gen Con So. Cal, I'm happy to share some exciting news. As some folks have doubtlessly seen on our website, the search for a new RPGA Content Manager has come to a close and it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Chris Tulach as the new face here at RPGA Headquarters. For those of you asking, "Who's Chris Tulach?" here's a brief RPGA resume. Chris started playing D&D in 1983 and joined the RPGA 1991. His very first RPGA adventure, "Jorvik," was written for the Living Death campaign and premiered in 1999. Just scant weeks later, he was brought on board to help launch the Living Greyhawk campaign as a regional triad member for Highfolk (real-world Wisconsin, USA). In 2004 Chris took the mantle of Living Greyhawk circle member for Iuz's Border States. Throughout his Living Greyhawk involvement, Chris has written more than twenty-five sanctioned rounds of adventures, including three core specials. I hope everyone will join me in welcoming Chris to RPGA HQ and I know you'll be hearing lots from him both online and in these pages.

Next is the announcement lot of people have been waiting for. Winter Fantasy 2007 has become the D&D Experience. I'll elaborate more about the changes here next month and what we see as the role of D&D Experience going forward. I do want to confirm, though, that D&D Experience will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, 2799 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA. 22202 on February 15–18. More information about the program of events and special room rates are on the RPGA website from early December onwards. D&D Experience promises more fun, games, and community than ever before. If you're serious about D&D you need to be at D&D Experience!

GOD OF WAR II

God of War II picks up right where the first left off: the Spartan hero Kratos has succeeded in murdering Ares and has taken up his mantle as the god of war. The rest of the Greek pantheon immediately conspires against their newly raised brother, though, betraying him and returning him to mortal form. Letting his rage again take hold, Kratos decides that if killing a god won't sate his bloodlust he'll go one step further: He'll kill fate.

Thus, Kratos sets out to kill the three Fates—the sisters whose laws govern Zeus and his host. Relying on sheer brutality and a bit of magic, Kratos fights his way across the Greek world, hunting the sisters to the literal edge of the world: the Temple of Fate.

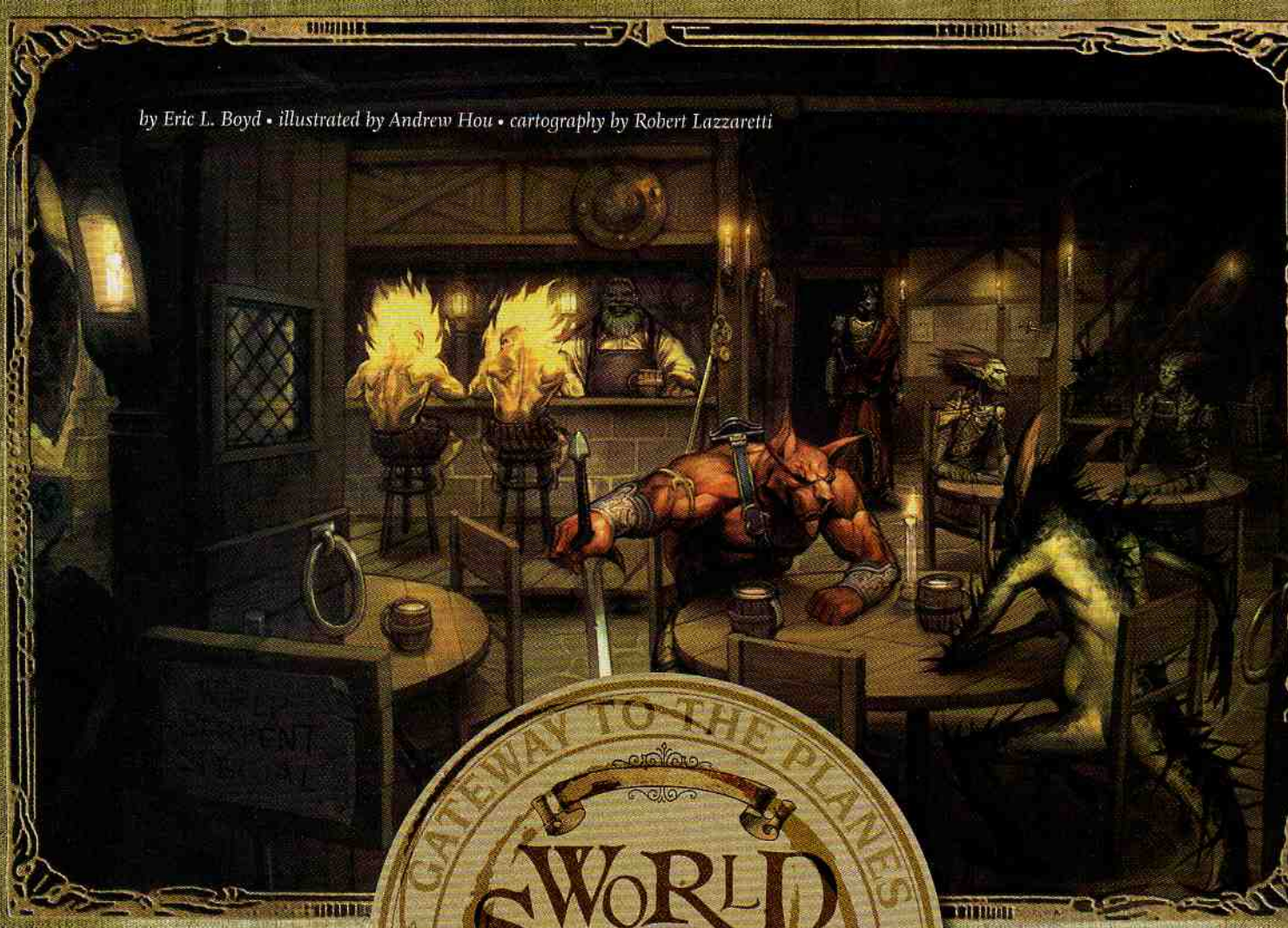
God of War II captures the look and feel of the original with nice stylistic changes to the game play. If you've ever played in a campaign where you've challenged the might of a god, or you're into fast-paced action and have the stomach for a healthy dose of gore, then this is the game for you.

GODS & HEROES: ROME RISING

Gods & Heroes: Rome Rising is a massively multiplayer online RPG set in a fantasy version of Rome. The fledgling republic has conquered most of the known world and subjugated the barbarian hordes throughout Latium. Now they face a threat greater than their unruly neighbors: a powerful and ancient enemy, once banished by Jupiter, the thunder god, has returned and wants to see nothing less than the total destruction of Rome.

You begin the game as a captive of the evil Telchines, a race of sorcerers who believe that toppling Rome is the first step to killing the gods. Your choice of a variety of class and god combinations determines how you'll escape and seek greater glory in Latium. As you advance, wide arrays of combat feats, weaponry, squadrons of loyal followers, and powers granted by the gods become available. Perhaps most interesting, though, is that *Rome Rising* features a new fast-paced, squad-based combat system that promises to set it apart from other MMOs. With its innovations to combat and its basis in classical mythology, *God & Heroes* promises to be much more than just another online fantasy RPG.

by Eric L. Boyd • illustrated by Andrew Hou • cartography by Robert Lazzaretti



The World Serpent Inn is a tavern between worlds, intermittently linked to cities across the planes. Travelers of any race or creed are welcome to drink and sup within its walls on their way from one world to the next, although there is no guarantee they can ever return home.

Introducing the World Serpent Inn to Your Campaign

The World Serpent Inn allows the DM to bring new elements from other game worlds into his home campaign, to send the player characters into other campaign settings for a brief sojourn or extended stay, or to construct a mini-adventure within the boundaries of the World Serpent Inn itself. In the first case, the variable nature of connections to the World Serpent Inn allows the DM to decide which elements of another campaign setting to import and which to ban. In the second, the World Serpent Inn provides a simple mechanic for trying out a new campaign setting with an existing roster of player characters without scrapping the current campaign and restarting. The third possibility allows the DM to try aspects of both approaches, mixing a new game element into the campaign without introducing it into the wider campaign or moving to a new setting.

The World Serpent Inn as a Transitive Plane

From a practical, meta-game perspective, the World Serpent Inn is simply an otherworldly place that can be entered into or departed from at a time and place of the DM's choosing. In the parlance of the *Manual of the Planes*, the World Serpent Inn is a variant transitive plane that can replace or supplement the Astral Plane in the cosmology. Whereas the Astral Plane is generally accessible from any point on other planes, the World Serpent Inn is coterminous with a given other plane at only one particular point in time, and sometimes not at all. There are a handful of "regular" linkages between the World Serpent Inn and each

"Afta' one visit to the Wild Goose, you'll either swear off drinkin' forever... or start!"

–Gellifar Braceblade
Year of the Tankard (1370 DR)

individual world, although other locales are always possible, at the DM's prerogative.

The World Serpent Inn has the following planar traits: normal gravity, timeless, infinite size, alterable morphic trait, no elemental or alignment trait, minor positive energy trait, impeded magic, damage reduction, and visibility. Planar traits are defined in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* on pages 147–150 and the *Manual of the Planes* on pages 7–14.

In game terms, the environment of the World Serpent Inn differs from the Material Plane as follows: creatures do not age but they do suffer from hunger and thirst. The back passages and chambers extend forever, although many doors and passages return wanderers to the common room. Creatures gain fast healing 2 and may even regrow lost limbs over time. To cast a spell or use a spell-like ability, a creature must make a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level). Within the common room, all creatures gain damage reduction 10/—. All creatures gain the ability to *see invisible* out to their normal sight range.

The main entrance to the World Serpent Inn is a two-way variable portal whose destination changes quite frequently. The Inn also has hundreds of other exits, most of which are one-way portals and some of which are variable portals, accessible from the maze of passages leading out of the common room in all directions. The World Serpent Inn has its own Ethereal Plane and is coterminous with the wild desolate reaches of Deep Shadow on the Plane of Shadow.

History of the World Serpent Inn

The World Serpent Inn first appeared in print in 1988 in *OP1: Tales of the Outer Planes*, followed by numerous mentions in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, PLANESCAPE, and elsewhere. Most recently, it was detailed in the web enhancement for the *Manual of the Planes*, found at: **wizards.com/dnd/files/World_Serpent.pdf.** As that web enhancement is still available online, this brief overview focuses more on the atmospherics and personalities of the World Serpent Inn than the game mechanics of its operation.

The Place

Descriptions of the inn vary from world to world and visitor to visitor, but certain elements are always held in common: the World Serpent Inn consists of a common room built around a central bar and a maze of back corridors and chambers. The inn exists on its own demiplane and is irregularly linked to every other world in the Multiverse. The far sides of the common room are always hazy and indistinct, making precise mapping of the inn impossible.

The common room of the World Serpent Inn resembles an ancient tavern, with plank floors underfoot and venerable wooden beams overhead. Illumination comes from glowing fluted pillars scattered about and a large shaft of light in the center of the common room.

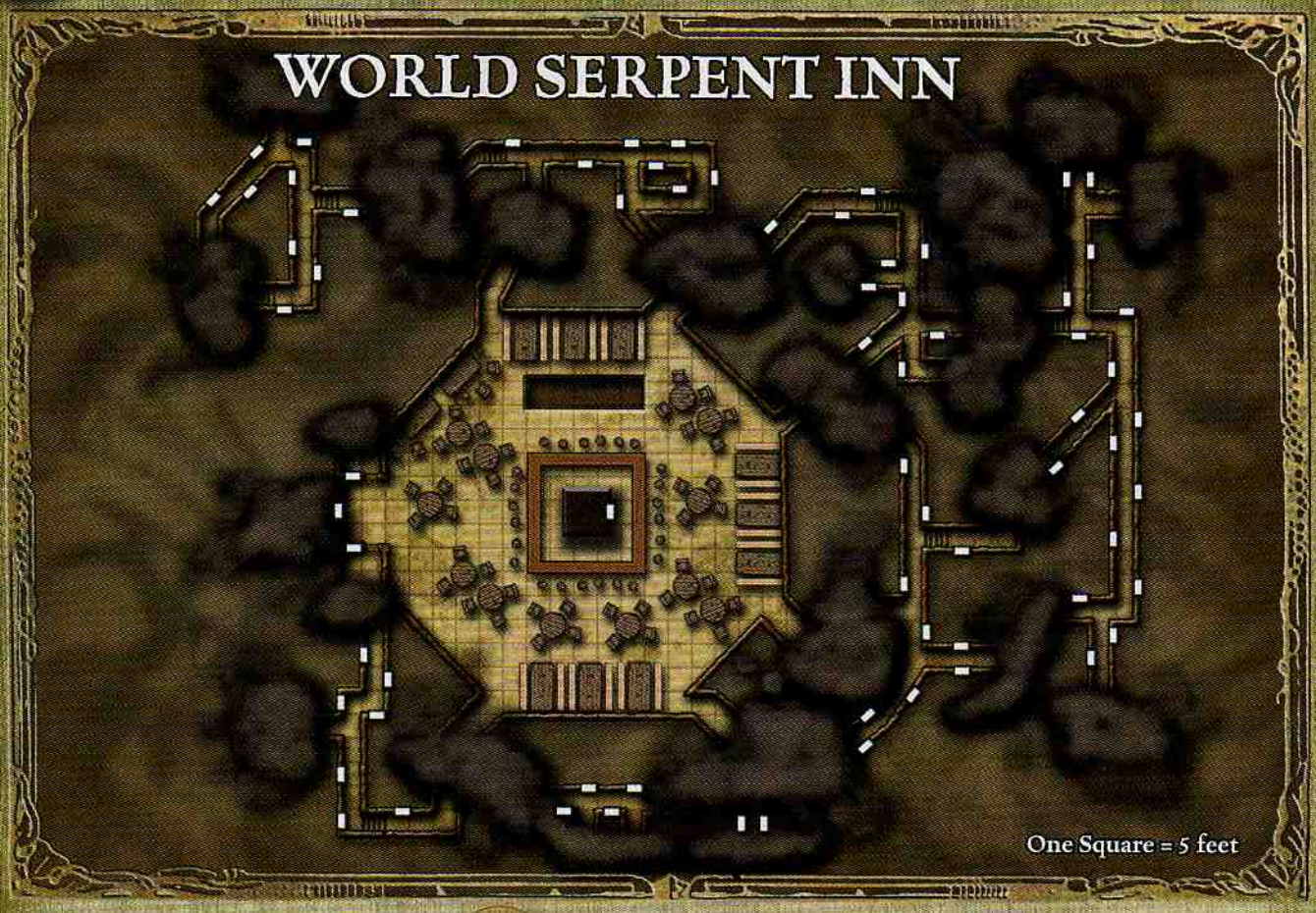
The common room is dominated by a large bar surrounded by exotic-looking stools in the center of the chamber (variously described as round, square, or octagonal). In the center of the bar area is a massive pillar lined with shelves filled with all manner of exotic drinks. A concealed door leads down to the wine and beer cellar, thought to lie on another plane in the wine cellar of a bacchanalian god of alcohol. Surrounding the bar sit tables large and small. Long tables and booths line the walls of the place. One side of the room is dominated by a massive brawling pit (10 feet wide by 30 feet long by 20 feet deep) ringed by a low wall on which patrons can rest a drink while observing a bout below.

The main entrance into the World Serpent Inn is a set of massive double doors leading past a pair of coatrooms into the common room. A half-dozen passages lead out of the common room into the back halls and chambers of the demiplane. The back halls are uniformly dark and gloomy, although the construction varies from plaster to wood to stone blocks. The back chambers also differ in appearance, representing the tastes and sensibilities of a multitude of races and cultures.

The house rules are simple: Food's on the house. Leave when you're ready. Do not attack the waitstaff. Attacks on other patrons are scorned by the regulars, outside of the brawling pit. Management is not responsible for the loss of property or life in the back rooms.

The Atmosphere

An eerie, sweet-smelling blue mist that impedes all forms of vision and renders the far side of the



bar hazy and indistinct fills the air of the World Serpent Inn. As a result, a creature can never see the entirety of the common room at any one time, which makes apparent changes in the number and composition of exits and patrons and other fluctuations in the demiplane's reality.

Some travelers to the World Serpent Inn have described it as a neutral ground, where by custom all manner of creatures—from undead to aberrations, humanoids to outsiders—can mingle safely without fear of attack. Others decry such tales as nonsense, recounting incidents where a simple missunderstanding precipitated a tavern brawl encompassing every patron of the establishment. The truth is probably somewhere in between: fighting among patrons is allowed but frowned upon outside the brawling pit, where such disputes are normally settled.

Tales of the Wild Goose

Although a portal to the World Serpent Inn can appear anywhere in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, just like in any other campaign setting, the only regular means of accessing Mitchifer's demesne on Faerûn requires a visit to the Wild Goose, a run-down tavern along the northern wall of the city of Arabel (location #152 on most maps of the city) in the kingdom of Cormyr. Access to the World Serpent Inn requires passing under the signboard of the Wild Goose, standing in front of the regular door, knocking on an imaginary door in the air, and calling on any divine being by name. The invocation must include a proper name of a deity and the words "I" and "enter" in the language being spoken. For example, say "By the honor of Azuth, I will enter" or "In the name of Set, I enter." Once performed, the would-be entrant sees the signboard change to read "The World Serpent Inn" across a horizontal figure-eight of a serpent eating its tail.

World Serpent Libations

All manner of drinks are offered for sale at the World Serpent Inn, and there is no drink that Mitchifer does not know how to make or the well-stocked cellars of the Inn cannot furnish. Crowd favorites include such concoctions as dwarf-brewed hammer ale, Elysium elixir, elven zzarr, orc-brewed oxblood ale, Venetian mountain brew, Sigma flytrapper, Sterozium, and Styx sorrows.

Background

The World Serpent for which the inn is named is the original deity

The Queen's Kiss

In Eberron, the World Serpent Inn has a number of portals that open from time to time, all across the continent of Khorvaire and beyond. Of these, only one is relatively permanent: the Queen's Kiss. Located in the bustling city of Fairhaven, the capitol of Aundair, the Queen's Kiss is a flower shop throughout the day, but those who approach it after hours often hear the sounds of laughter and merriment, even though it is dark and empty inside. Anyone who attempts to open the door to the shop while standing on any sort of flower petals instead finds the portal to the World Serpent Inn. Other doorways to the Inn certainly exist, but they are not constant. Known portals open to Sharn, Stormreach, and Sarlona, while a single rotting door opens to the ruined city of Metrol in the Mournland.

of many reptilian races. The fragmentation of the World Serpent (which resulted in many of the reptilian deities in existence today) somehow precipitated the formation of the demiplane. According to some philosophers, the demiplane is a somnolent deity (a fragment of the World Serpent) whose dreams manifest in the form of intermittent portals to worlds to which its consciousness is drifting, but the truth of such conjecture is unknown.

The World Serpent Inn itself is said to be centuries-old, although each culture has its own tales about the builders of the inn and their motivations for constructing it. In most descriptions, the builders of the World Serpent Inn include two of the following individuals: the archmage Alaurum of Toril, Ilyndele of the Arcane (a mercane trader), or the illithid High One, Sharth. Most also include a third creator, who varies depending on who is asked, but all tellers of the legend claim the third builder to be from their home worlds.

The Waitstaff

The staff of the World Serpent Inn consists of a barkeep, named Mitchifer, and the serpent wenches, as the generally female servers are commonly known. According to some reports, the serpent wenches vary greatly in number and race between visits, while other accounts suggest a loyal waitstaff with a very long tenure.

Mitchifer

The barkeep of the World Serpent Inn, commonly known as the Master of the Serpent, appears to be a tall, fat human male with a long white beard, rosy cheeks, and a booming laugh. His face is perpetually split in a wide grin. Close examination of his beard reveals it to be a thicket of thousands of miniature, writhing, white snakes. His eyes have ornately carved jet-black doors in lieu of irises.

Mitchifer is full of zest and never angers or despairs, no matter the provocation. He never harbors grudges and is unfailingly polite to all clients, regardless of their past behavior. Despite his willingness to chat, the Master of the Serpent never conveys any significant information beyond the basic rules of the house.

Mitchifer is thought to be a divine servant of the owner (the consciousness whose whims govern the demiplane). Although he has been slain on rare occasions, Mitchifer is always found at his regular post on subsequent visits, with a nary a flicker in his smile.

Mitchifer's true nature is left up to the DM to determine, but one suggestion is to make him a neutral male human paragon (*Epic Level Handbook*) fighter 20 whose human-looking guise is a direct manifestation of the

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demiplane-deity who governs the World Serpent Inn.

Serpent Wenches

Most of the serpent wenches resemble comely, cherubic gnomes some 3 feet in height with pointed ears and noses with a slight, reddish hue. They wear revealing frocks made from the deep indigo skin of an otherworldly serpent adorned with twinkling points of white light. A close examination of each wench's garb suggests a view into a section of the heavens, almost as if the dress was a portal to outer space.

For the most part, the serpent wenches are chaotic neutral female half-fey gnome rogues, although their exact level should be adjusted to match that of the player characters. Regardless of their Strength, each serpent wench is capable of lifting huge platters of drinks and navigating through the always-crowded common room without the slightest bit of effort.

The serpent wenches are said to hail from the realm of Faerie, although it is unclear if that is a world unto itself or a separate dimension of another place. They are said to fear a fey marauder that stalks the backroads and crossroads of their realm, but the nature of such a creature, if it even exists, is unknown.

The Regulars

Like any tavern, the World Serpent Inn has its regulars: long-time patrons who never seem to leave and are as much a part of the backdrop as the ever-present haze. Some are trapped here, unable to find a way home, while others have fled their native worlds and fear the day the doors open wide to the place from which they ran. A handful dwell elsewhere but return regularly by way of all-but-guaranteed entrances and exits.

Akim al-Kalaas

Akim al-Kalaas (CE male Zakharan human sha'ir 14 [*Dragon Compendium*]) is a tall, unnaturally thin man with a dark scraggly beard, hooked nose, and wild eyes. He wears silk robes of either dark green or maroon samite, and always wears a deep yellow turban set with an blood-red ruby. He carries a teak staff carved with two interlocking spirals and topped with a brass figurine of a capering monkey.

Akim hails from Hiyal, the City of Intrigue, on the continent of Zakhara in Al-Qadim. In his youth, he tried and failed to magically coerce the sultana of Hiyal to marry him. He later took service with Grandfather Marwan al-Jabal al-Hiyali, the Old Man of the Mountain, swearing an oath to serve him until Marwan's death. For many years Akim led the Unclean, a quiet and unassuming faction among the holy slayers of the Everlasting in the fortress of Sarahin, better known as Assassin Mountain. Marwan's death finally released Akim from his oath, and the half-mad sha'ir immediately fled to seek his own destiny.

After stumbling through a portal to the World Serpent Inn in the High Desert of Zakhara, Akim now resides in a back room and spends his days in a quiet corner of the common room. The sha'ir has found a quiet line of work as an information broker and regularly meets with genies from the Elemental Planes.

Chch'kraran

Chch'kraran (N male thri-kreen fighter 5/dervish 4 [*Complete Warrior*]) is a hulking thri-kreen standing over 7 feet tall. He has six limbs with a tough, sandy-yellow exoskeleton. His four forward limbs each have a hand with three fingers and an opposable thumb. He has lost the naiveté of youth, but retains his insatiable curiosity about the customs of other races.

Chch'kraran hails from the world of Athas, where he was dispatched by his tribe to to the city of Tyr to acquire the famed steel weapons of Tyrian craftsmen. He stumbled into the World Serpent Inn by accident long ago and has never found a way to return.

Chch'kraran has adopted the waitstaff and regular patrons of the World Serpent Inn as his pack and evinces complete and utter loyalty to them. Other patrons of the World Serpent Inn might find him friendly one minute and murderous the next. The thri-kreen is a regular combatant in the brawling pits, as he has a tendency to challenge patrons who give any offense to the serpent wenches, no matter how small.

Chch'kraran's longstanding interest in acquiring steel weapons for his pack has transformed into an interest in magical weapons. He now makes a living buying and selling magic arms and armaments with the patrons of the World Serpent Inn. He keeps his current inventory stashed in various backrooms.

Kraksha of Khorvaire

Kraksha of Khorvaire (LE male rakshasa sorcerer 9) is a painfully thin humanoid tiger garbed in great flowing robes of purple and gold. His tiger fur is greasy and sparse, with large tufts of hair missing from various portions of his anatomy.

This renegade rakshasa is an exile from the continent of Khorvaire on the world of Eberron. During the Last War, he succumbed to some form of curse and was driven into exile by his kin, who feared they might too share his fate.

Kraksha is still finding his place among the regulars of the World Serpent Inn, for his constant scheming and attempts to dominate his fellow patrons have won him no allies among the clientele. As a result, the once-proud Kraksha has been reduced to selling spells to fund his efforts and pay his mounting tab at the bar.

Mellomir of Arabel

Mellomir of Arabel (LN male Chondathan human diviner 12/lorekeeper 10/archmage 5) is a dry, dapper man whose neatly trimmed hair and beard are going white. Known for his encyclopedic knowledge of history and study of prophecies and divinations, Mellomir is a respected seer who has accurately predicted several important events on Toril, including the deaths of Bhaal and Myrkul during the Time of Troubles, the reappearance of the fabled *Ring of Winter*, the invasion of the Inner Sea by Iakhovas, and the return of the City of Shade. He's also survived several kidnapping attempts and single-handedly destroyed an entire Westgate family after it deemed him a foe and tried repeatedly to assassinate him.

In recent years, the Seer of Arabel has largely abandoned the city for the familiar confines of the World Serpent Inn. Although he claims a regular table at the World Serpent is better for business (he gives consultations for outrageous fees), many suspect that Mellomir has foreseen some great cataclysm that will soon unfold on his native world, which he seeks to avoid by residing within the World Serpent Inn. Mellomir's willingness to hire adventurers to recover artifacts of Faerûnian construction lost on other planes adds credence to this theory.

Phoebus

Phoebus (N male lizardfolk fighter 13) is a powerfully built lizardfolk with clawed hands, a long tail, and toothy jaws. He favors a bearskin loincloth and knee-high black leather boots made from the hide of a displacer beast. He keeps a longsword in a scabbard at his side and wields a finely made trident.

Born in the World of Greyhawk as a human of mixed Oerid-Suel extraction, Phoebus became an adventurer only to die in the bowels of some nameless dungeon in the Cairn hills. As a cleric was unavailable, a druid compatriot reincarnated him, and Phoebus returned as a lizardfolk. Phoebus is more intelligent than most lizardfolk, and he speaks several languages. While most people expect lizardfolk to be savage and cruel, Phoebus behaves with good nature and tact.

After many years of tolerating the stares and whispered cruelties on his native world, Phoebus stumbled

into the World Serpent Inn during a visit to the city of Irongate. The reincarnated lizardfolk now contentedly resides at the World Serpent Inn, where his appearance hardly draws a bit of attention and his services as a bodyguard are in high demand.

The Bearded Reaver

"The Bearded Reaver" (LE adult neogi sorcerer 12) is a horrid aberration with eight spiderlike legs covered with stiff hair extending from the body of a giant wolf spider. Instead of a spider's head, it has a long, flexible neck topped by a narrow, eel-like head with tiny, needle-sharp teeth and small, black eyes pushed well forward on its face. Its naturally tan skin is dyed a deep, iridescent purple, and its chin sports a stark white beard.

The Bearded Reaver—its true name is unknown—is a renegade neogi who fled its kin to avoid the transformation into a Great Old Master. It surreptitiously discovered a portal to the World Serpent Inn in the depths of space and has never left, as the timeless trait of the demiplane has allowed it to escape death ever since.

The renegade neogi makes its living buying and selling slaves in the back halls of the World Serpent Inn. It is never without a pair of massive umber hulk bodyguards, who obey their master's every command. The Bearded Reaver also arranges gladiatorial matches and tournaments in the brawling pit and collects a cut of the wagers placed on such bouts.

The Backrooms and Corridors

The backrooms and corridors of the World Serpent Inn are a maze of passages lined with doors. Some doors are portals (described above), while others are simple chambers, ranging in size from a few feet square to dozens of feet on a side. Even long-time residents of the World Serpent Inn have trouble navigating the back corridors, for they are prone to shift their configuration at random intervals. Moreover, doors are known to irregularly vanish or appear (oftentimes elsewhere in the labyrinth of passages). Each door is unique, allowing those who seek to return to a particular room the chance to recognize the portal that they seek.

Although almost anything goes in the common room of the World Serpent Inn, the administration and control of the back passages is even more anarchic. Visitors to the World Serpent Inn regularly claim dominion over a section of corridor or a handful of rooms, charging travelers for passage or a place to rest. Curiously, the demiplane seems to reject such efforts, for its random reconfigurations seem to reliably undermine any effort to establish a long-standing dominion over more than a single room or corridor.

You Bet Your Booty!

Being a pirate, or adventurer of any sort, often revolves around the redistribution of wealth. Sometimes it is the result of marauding, but not always. A good game is often a welcome diversion. With Crystal Caste's new Pyrate's Plunder Poker Set, you're ready. Each round-topped wooden chest contains a deck of playing cards with beautifully illustrated backs, five dice with a pirate flag in place of the one, and pirate doubloon poker chips in gold, silver, and copper. All you need now are easy prey to plunder.

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Al-Qadim CAMPAIGN

Magic and Intrigue in the High Desert Tribes

by Wolfgang Baur • illustrated by Andrew Hou

All praise to the lonegiven and to the al-badia, his favored children, who ride free over the dunes and plateaus of the high desert, in the pure lands of the enlightened. Praise to the sheikhs and the viziers who lead the tribes, the houses of asad, bakr, dhi'b, thawr, who outwit the creatures of the pit of ghuls, who give alms to the charitable projects of the desert mosque. All praise to the house of nasr, the eagle that guards the mosque.

And among us tonight is a new tribe, the al-qamar, the children of the moon. let us welcome them with roast lamb, with rice and tea and all things in abundance, and with all the joy in our hearts.

The portal connecting the World Serpent Inn to Al-Qadim drops explorers 90 miles from the Great Oasis, during a gathering of tribes, when the various major houses of the desert gather to trade, arrange marriages, conduct politics, dispense justice, and settle feuds.

This time, the gathering is hosted by the House of Nasr, the tribe responsible for guarding the Desert Mosque that is the most important *haram* (holy site) of the desert riders. In addition, Sheikh Nadia umm Fadela (LG female human fighter 15) declared that all sheikhs and viziers must feast with her at least twice, at the start and end of the gathering, in a grand "desert council." She hopes to generate some unity and settle a few old disputes

over food. Foreigners and strangers aren't deeply welcome, but desert hospitality never falters.

Characters who leave the World Serpent Inn find themselves in the deep desert, about three days' ride (or seven days' walk) from the Desert Mosque. A DC 15 Survival check determines the likely sources of water and shade, such as the nearby Three-Jackal Oasis.

the cities and the deserts

Most *ajami* (foreigners) who come to the land of Zakhara lavish praise on the Al-Hadhar, the rooted citizens of the villages, towns, and the enormous cities—from Hiyal, the City of Intrigue, to Huzuz, the City of Delights. But some would say the cities are only the most familiar landmarks, that the true heart of Zakhara and the Enlightened people of the Loregiver are the desert tribes: the Al-Badia. They live in the High Desert and in the Haunted Lands to the north, always moving their herds, their tents, and their goods, and always unshakeable in their fervor, their honor, and their Fate.

The other half of the people of Zakhara are the Al-Hadhar, the settled people of the cities and coastlines. Although perhaps more numerous in the great cities, their lives are often poor and short—slavery, famine, and war are more common among the Al-Hadhar than among the desert people.

Both the Al-Badia and the Al-Hadhar are followers of Fate—which determines the course of all things and can undermine the proudest and mightiest caliph—as expressed in the words of the Loregiver, a woman whose Fate-inspired teachings form the foundation of all law and most customs of the Land of Fate.

friendly nomads

If the DM is especially generous, a group of desert riders finds the party and offers camels and clothes to ward off the sun and heat for the low price of 200 gp per person. Haggling doesn't work in this situation: The desert riders are members of the tribe of Thawr, the children of the Bull, known for their excellent camels and their feuds with the Pearl Cities. If the PCs attack or attempt to buy their valuable camels cheap, the Thawr simply ride away. Even if merchants of Thawr return, their prices double.

A successful DC 12 Survival check allows the party to follow the Al-Thawr tribe across the sands to the Desert Mosque. Once there, the party is not welcomed unless at least one member is a desert rider or a ranger, druid, or barbarian with desert skills the tribes respect. Groups with at least one such person are welcomed—begrudgingly, if not warmly.

land of fate

Discover more of Al-Qadim's mysteries at either the downloads section of **wizards.com/dnd** or with the fan-continued campaign at **al-qadim.com.**

the seven great tribes of the high desert

House of Nasr, the people of the eagle, serves as the host of this gathering of nomads. The house's sheikh, Nadia umm Fadela, is one of the few female leaders among the desert tribes. The Nasr guard the Desert Mosque, a *haram* of great importance to the tribes. It stands in the northern reaches, not far from the Pit of Ghuls and the land bridge to the north, past the City of Delights. This year, the Desert Mosque is the center of the great gathering of tribes, an event held every four or five years in a different quarter of the High Desert, as Fate wills it.

Attending this year are the Nasr, of course, but also the House of Asad, the children of the lion, led by the most powerful man of the High Desert, Sheikh Najib bin Kamal al-Asad (LN male human, fighter 20). The Asad tribe might only be guests of the Nasr, but their horses are watered first and graze on the best pasture near the oasis. Although Sheikh Nadia of the Nasr is the host of each night's feast—the feast of Sheikhs, of Viziers, of the Maidens, and so forth—Sheikh Najib sits at Sheikh Nadia's right hand each night, and whether he whispers or bellows, those around him listen closely.

The remaining tribes include the wolflike raiders of House Dhi'b, the respectable House Dubb sheep herders, the camel herders of House Thawr (led by the slightly crazed and apocalyptic elf Sheikh Ali Al-Sadid), and tiny House Bakr, the smallest of the great tribes that has largely settled in the city of Tajar. The seventh house is the House of Sihr, the jann who follow His Resplendent Magnificence, the honest but ruthless Amir Bouladin al-Mutajalli (LE male janni, sha'ir 10 [*Dragon Compendium*, 51]), in the depths of the inhospitable Great Anvil of the desert.

Although the jann rarely leave the inhospitable lands of the Anvil, they are showing themselves at the Great Mosque this year. Further, they arrive with a warning: the dao are coming, and they are not planning to drink tea and talk of sheep and camel breeding.

hostile nomads: the uninvited

Two tribes are even more hostile than most and are never invited to the gatherings: the Houses of Uqab and Tayif, also called the Ghost-Warriors. Either or both might harass the PCs in the desert, demanding tolls or "escort fees."

The Tayif are white-clad raiders led by the foreigner, Sheikh Mouli al-Ajami (LG male human, paladin 14), and are fanatical enemies of the Grand Caliph. They seek to enslave anyone

who proclaims loyalty to the caliph, pillaging and destroying their settlements. They wish to recruit foreigners against the seven great tribes, to disrupt the "debauched traffic with spirits" and other blasphemous activities that they claim happen during the gathering.

The Uqab are a league of vultures, consisting of outcasts, exiles, scavengers, raiders, and horse thieves. They are led by Sheikh Hanjar al-Haqara (NE male human, rogue 18) and his disreputable vizier, a flame mage who was formerly a member of the Brotherhood of True Fire. Neither tribe is enlightened or civilized, but both demand money, wine, or fine mounts from "trespassers" in the desert.

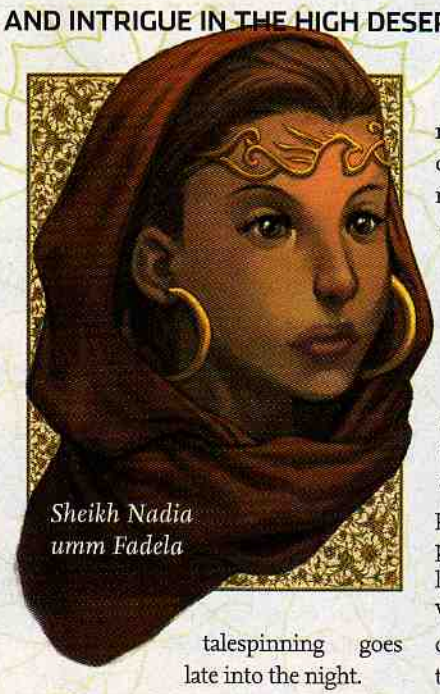
adventures in the high desert

The camps and caravans of the desert tribes are full of intrigue, alliances, marriages, and haggling, providing the backdrop for all manner of high adventure. Any of these adventure ideas can be used to draw a party out of the World Serpent Inn and into Al-Qadim.

children of the moon

On the first night of the gathering, a new tribe rides in from the Haunted Lands to the north. The tribe calls itself the Al-Qamar, the Children of the Moon, and its gray, white, and purple-robed riders arrive at the last minute on the first night, riding strong but tired camels and displaying finely woven saddle blankets. First treated with suspicion (a new tribe hasn't been formed since the yellow-haired foreigner Sheikh Mouli al-Ajami created the violent raiding Tayif a decade ago), the old tribes welcome the people of Al-Qamar once it becomes clear they are peaceful, enlightened, and have a deep understanding of the desert.

The tribe's young sheikh, Fouad Al-Qamar (CG male human, ranger 14), impresses the other, older chieftains and joins them for the First Night Feast, sharing the Bond of Salt with them on his people's behalf. The bargaining and talespinning goes late into the night.



Sheikh Nadia umm Fadela

The next morning, though, shortly after dawn, things change. The Al-Qamar camels are skeletal—no more than leather over bones. Their riders are worse. Translucent and incorporeal in daylight, they are clearly undead. Rumors fly that this is some trick sent from the Pit of the Ghuls.

Although Sheikh Fouad's tribe is undead and incorporeal, the young sheikh is an exception. He claims he is the last living member of his tribe, and he seeks to find rest for his people from their ceaseless travels through the desert. Further, he claims the protection of the Bond of Salt for all his people. While the various tribes debate whether to break the Bond of Salt and throw them out, or even attack them, young Fouad asks the party to release his ghost tribe from its connection to the Material Plane. To do so requires a phoenix feather.

To release the Al-Qamar tribe (or for its own reasons), the party might pursue a phoenix nesting on a tall desert outcropping nearby. A single feather can release the souls of the entire ghost tribe—or can work other magic.

dao slavers

Some wicked sha'ir or spiteful jann has told the dao about the gathering of desert tribes, and as a result a number of dao organized an expedition to travel from the Great Dismal Delve and go raiding. The dao arrive in force, kidnapping anyone who wanders far from the Great Mosque, stealing horses, and generally breaking the peace of the gathering. If they hear of the phoenix, they make that their primary goal, sending small groups to delay or fight off any challengers who dare to venture near the phoenix's nesting site. When the phoenix has laid its egg and immolated itself, the dao leader, General Walid, plans on rising to the site on a *pillar of sand* to claim the bird's three golden feathers. He also uses the pillar when directing his troops against nomad attacks.

General Walid al-Muhaddith (LE male dao noble, fighter 10), the leader of the dao expedition, is confident in the thirty genies under his command and smug about their superiority to mere mortals or the "polluted" jann. Their goal involves capturing as many slaves, camels, and horses as they can, until discovered and chased by the superior forces of the combined tribes. At that point, General al-Muhaddith retreats and takes what he has won to the safety of the Great Dismal Delve on the Elemental Plane of Earth.

spells of the dao

The dao command a particular style of earth magic that they call the "province of sand," spells tailored and tested to use desert elements.

pillar of sand

Transmutation [Earth]
Level: Drd 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, F
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Area of Effect: See description
Saving Throw: Reflex (see text)
Spell Resistance: No

Concentrating for a moment, you feel the sand around you solidify and congeal. In moments, it rises into the air in a column.

You create a cylindrical pillar of sand that rises from the desert floor, carrying your target with it. Characters within 10 feet of the target also rise unless they jump clear with a successful Reflex save.

This spell works only in sandy regions such as dunes, beaches, and deserts, since the sand that makes up the pillar is drawn from the surrounding area. The top of the pillar is a solid and level circle with a 10-foot radius centered around the target of the spell. The solid top of the pillar is only an inch thick; the rest of it is very loose, thus requiring less sand than the volume would otherwise indicate.

Once the pillar is formed, it can rise as high as available sand allows, up to 10 feet per caster level. You can make the column shorter than its maximum height if you wish. If the pillar of sand or those upon it strikes another solid object (such as a cavern ceiling), the pillar automatically stops rising. Aside from those restrictions, you can raise and lower the pillar 10 feet per round as a free action. The pillar has Armor Class 9 + your Intelligence modifier, Hardness 5, and 10 hp per caster level. If reduced to 0 hit points or affected by a *move earth* or successful *dispel magic*, the pillar collapses and creatures atop it fall.

The pillar remains stationary unless willed to move by the caster or the target creature (in the case where the caster or target creature disagree on where the pillar should go, the caster's will wins out). The pillar has a move speed equal to 10 feet per five caster levels (10 feet at caster levels 3rd–5th, 20 feet at caster levels 6th–10th, and so on) to a maximum of 40 feet. The pillar cannot cross water. The pillar cannot move into or through an occupied square. A creature moving into the pillar of sand takes 1d4 points of damage per round and becomes blinded for 1d6 minutes. A successful Reflex save halves the damage and negates the blindness.

Sheikh Hanjar al-Haqara

Creatures other than the target of the spell riding atop the pillar can step off and on (such as onto or off of a nearby balcony) without affecting its stability or dispelling it. If the target of the spell steps off the top of the pillar, it immediately collapses. The caster can collapse the pillar at any time by dismissing the spell. Creatures stepping off the pillar take falling damage depending on the pillar's height.

Focus: Enough sand to create the pillar, such as that found on a beach or in desert terrain. Pebbles less than an inch across, grit, or even loose shale can also serve as sand, but solid stone, packed earth, mud, or rocks more than an inch across cannot. The spell requires 500 cubic feet of sand per 10 feet of height.

treasure of zakhara

Majestic and mysterious, a phoenix (*Monster Manual II*, 168) possesses a wide array of healing powers, as well as command over fire and several other powerful magical abilities. Occasionally, a phoenix sheds a magical feather, which it sometimes grants to a proven protector of good. Those of evil dispositions sometimes kill phoenixes for their feathers, but such an undertaking is fraught with peril. A magical feather from a phoenix is inherently tied to the potent power of the creature and cannot be made by mortal hands.

phoenix feather

This minor artifact grants its bearer several powerful magical effects.

Description: This foot-long feather has a golden shaft and barbules that blend from a bright crimson to a pale yellow. It feels somewhat warm to the touch, even in the coldest climates and long after it has left the body of a phoenix.

Prerequisite: You must be able to cast spells in order to use a phoenix feather to scribe a scroll.

Activation: Scribing a scroll with a *phoenix feather* requires the normal length of time to scribe a scroll of the chosen spell, as well as the appropriate paper and ink. Using a *phoenix feather* to destroy undead or water creatures requires a standard action and a command word. Activating a *phoenix feather* to bring back the dead requires 10 minutes of concentration.

Effect: A phoenix feather provides three abilities: inscribing spells of flame, destroying undead and water creatures, or restoring life to any living creature. Using any one of these effects destroys the feather.

Inscribing Spells: Any spellcaster can use a *phoenix feather* to scribe a scroll of any fire spell of any level. The caster need not understand the spell to write it properly and need not have the Scribe Scroll feat. The scroll is always flawless and written as if by a 24th-level caster. Using a scroll of a higher-level spell than you can cast subjects you to all the usual risks described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Destroying Undead or Water Creatures: The *phoenix feather* can be brandished to turn (but not rebuke) undead or creatures with the water subtype (as a cleric with the Fire domain) as a 24th-level cleric. A ghost destroyed by a *phoenix feather* cannot return to existence with its rejuvenation ability.

Restore Life: The *phoenix feather* can be used to cast *true resurrection* (caster level 24th).

Aura/Caster Level: Overwhelming transmutation. CL 24th.

Weight: —.

by Chris Flipse
illustrated by Jason Engle

ATHAS AND THE WORLD SERPENT INN

Deep in the back hallways of the World Serpent Inn stands a door kept under lock and key for as long as anyone can remember. Sand seeps in around the edges of the door, for the desert world—Athas—burns on the other side, ever under the searing heat of its darkened sun.

Ancient wars left Athas a dying wasteland with few regions capable of supporting human life. Athasians cluster around a handful of cities ruled by despotic wizards and psions called sorcerer-kings. With no deities to pray to and few ways to travel off the world, the people of Athas are truly isolated.

What little civilization remains centers on a region called the Tablelands—a desolate area other worlds would consider an uninhabitable desert dominated by sand dunes, barren stonescapes, and salt flats. For the people of Athas, however, the Tablelands offer respite from the true horrors of the rest of the world. Harsh conditions, even for the wealthy of the Tablelands, place survival at a premium, and strange beasts stalk the deserts.

In this godless world, Athasian clerics gain their powers through pacts with the elements. Psionics are commonplace: psions, psychic warriors, and wild talents predominate. Arcane spellcasters draw their magical energy from plant life. Careless or greedy wizards called defilers turn the ground around them into sterile ash wherever they cast spells. Failing to distinguish defilers from other wizards, known as preservers, most Athasians hate them all equally, blaming them for Athas' condition.

Athas used up most of its resources long ago, and little metal remains. Athasians make most of their weapons from bone, stone, and wood, and have developed numerous resins and treatments for hardening such materials. They sharpen obsidian, animal teeth, and bones to razor edges. Offworld visitors likely find their metal equipment of great interest to the locals. Such travelers must take care to retain their metal goods or find them suddenly missing when needed most.

INTO THE WASTES

The door to Athas opens in the depths of a set of ruins, half buried beneath a sand dune. The wind blows and shifts sand regularly, and careless travelers might easily lose track of the ruins. Someone new to Athas likely first notices its extreme heat: temperatures approach 140 degrees during the day. It is a dry heat as well, and the ill-prepared quickly find themselves dehydrated and dying of thirst (see pages 303 and 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

A narrow, unpaved trade road winds through rocky terrain several miles northwest of the ruins. The path to the road runs through large shifting sand dunes that make footing treacherous. The straightest route to the road from the door to the World Serpent Inn takes the better part of half a day.

The Village

A distant, nameless village becomes visible at the intersection where the path meets the road. The village contains fewer than a dozen poorly crafted huts made from dried mud and tattered animal hides. Most of the villagers—a dirty, scraggly group of ex-slaves—look famished. While fortunate enough to survive a mad escape into the desert, the villagers have begun to slowly starve to death. Like many other ex-slave communities, they have no idea how to care for themselves in the desert and likely face extinction within the year.

Near the village, a small oasis serves as a water supply for the villagers and as a provisioning point for caravans. Surrounding the oasis, a loose pile of scavenged rocks approximates an unstable wall about 6 feet tall, with mud taking the place of mortar. A pool of muddy, brackish water, 12 feet in diameter, feeds a modest area where plant life grows thick and green.

This small, nameless oasis lies about 20 miles southeast of the city-state of Draj. If travelers can find a reliable guide, the journey there only takes two days. If they take up with a caravan (usually slow-moving but heavily defended) instead, the journey can last anywhere from four to eight days, but they have a much better chance of surviving all of the dangers of Athas.

By virtue of strength, a man named Vhreen (CN male human barbarian 8) assumed command of the village. Vhreen came up with the idea to wall off the oasis to control the resource and secure trade from passing caravans. Most traders accept this as the cost of doing business, because Vhreen's "water fees" remain low. Vhreen's handful of loyal guards take most of the benefit of this trade, while the rest of the ex-slaves starve. For all his bravado, Vhreen is careful not to anger the trade caravans that pass through. Some carry as many guards as there are villagers, and in the wastelands, the merchant houses that control the caravans are a law unto themselves. Nobody would miss a village of ex-slaves.

Several small animals come and go at the oasis, most darting quickly between rocks or hiding in small shrubs around the pool. One of the regularly seen animals—an herbivorous raslinn (see DUNGEON #111)—is actually a halfling druid named Derlan (LN male halfling druid 10). Derlan guards this desert oasis, observing all comers carefully, watching for abuses: excessive hunting, overdraining of the water supply, and the worst sin of all—defiling.

In Derlan's true form, he has deep red, unkempt hair that appears to not have met a brush in years. His teeth are filed down to sharp points, he wears a simple cloth robe, and he seems unbothered by the heat. Derlan distrusts everyone and remains in animal form unless it becomes absolutely necessary to converse with someone. The halfling avoids contact with the village that recently appeared, and since he feels the desert will soon reclaim it, he feels no need to introduce himself.

The Elves

The Skydancer tribe of elves claim the sands around the oasis. They and all other Athasian elves distrust those not of their tribe, and they are not likely to engage in small talk with travelers—even those from other worlds—except to create a distraction while robbing them. General gossip in the ex-slave village holds that the elves are plotting something. While the two groups have never been friendly, some of the elves came by the village a few times each week to drink at the oasis. None of the Skydancers have visited in more than a week, however, and the villagers claim the desert has taken on a foreboding stillness.

Travelers not native to Athas likely don't recognize the Skydancers as elves. Standing nearly 7-feet tall, Athasian elves are consummate desert dwellers: their clothing blends in with the desert sands and their leathery skin appears sun-baked and gaunt. Quick thinking and nimble, Athasian elves make natural runners, and their long strides swiftly eat up miles. They rarely care about those outside their tribe and are renown across the Tablelands as thieves, raiders, smugglers, and liars. Although known as the most reliable sources for contraband material, such as spell components, elves just as often cheat their "business partners" as make fair deals.

The Caravan

Trade caravans frequently cross the Tablelands, stopping at oases and villages along the way. The following sample caravan might stop by the village of ex-slaves during the PCs' visit.

The wagons of this caravan fly a black banner with two bestial yellow eyes. The ex-slave villagers identify the caravan as belonging to House Tsalaxa, a major merchant house. The small caravan, built for speed, boasts a dozen outriders on crodlu—two-legged animals resembling scaled ostriches. Another six traders ride on inix—large, slow-moving lizards—which are also laden with saddle-

The World of Athas

Do you want to know more about DARK SUN? DRAGON #315 presents in-depth rules for defiler magic, DRAGON #319 updates DARK SUN to third edition with roughly thirty pages of rules and background information, while DRAGON #339 presents the dragon king epic prestige class. Also, make sure to visit the DARK SUN website at **athas.org**, or take part in the fan community discussions over at **wizards.com/boards**.

bags and tightly wrapped bundles. Two wagons, one open and the other completely enclosed, round out the caravan, each pulled by a team of two unburdened inix.

The trade goods the caravan carries offer little of interest to most adventurers, consisting of salt, wheat, and bolts of silk and linen. Hidden among its mundane trade goods, the caravan carries large bones suitable for use as weapons, massive scales usable for shields and armor, and ancient stone statues meant for a templar's temple. The caravan traders are extremely interested in any metal gear travelers might carry, however, and are willing to trade services, some personal possessions, and large quantities of ceramic coins (the currency of the metal-poor Tablelands) for them. The caravan's guards and traders consider the cargo in the enclosed wagon to be quite valuable, as they let no one approach.

Two defilers serve among the caravan guards, as well as a telepath and a seer. The defilers happily train any wizards they meet in their particular, destructive way of spellcasting.

The caravan traders usually require about a day to gather enough water from the oasis to carry themselves to their next destination. In that time, they willingly trade with all comers.

DARING THE WASTES

The primary goal of every living creature on Athas is survival, making the accumulation of wealth or glory secondary concerns. From lost desert wanders to desperate slaves seeking aid for their village a variety of desolate souls might wander into the World Serpent Inn seeking respite and salvation.

Blighted Well: Shortly after the caravan arrives, the oasis dries to a trickle. The caravan guards and traders take up position inside the oasis walls and refuse to leave until they accumulate enough water to continue on. The threat of death by dehydration soon begins to loom over the villagers.

Some mutter angrily about the "Spirit of the Well" and point to circles of ash that have appeared since the caravan's arrival. The villagers claim the caravan brought a blight, dooming the village by drying up the oasis. No one in the village can truly challenge the caravan, and no one is sure why the oasis has run dry.

All of these events are the machinations of defiler wizards attached to the caravan, who seek to usurp control of the caravan from the current leaders. The circles of ash are created when the defilers cast their spells to lower the water level of the oasis.

Desert Justice: A half-starving villager calling himself Nine-Fingers approaches the PCs, perhaps within the World Serpent Inn (where his ceramic pieces lack any value). Nine-Fingers begs of the PCs to help him confront the village leader. He claims that Vhreen rules through fear and oppression. Nine-Fingers says he fears for his life and believes Vhreen plans to turn him over to the next group of slavers to come through the village—a grave accusation in a community of ex-slaves.

If the party refuses to assist Nine-Fingers, he disappears and cannot be found again. If the party ends up in the village at the same time as the caravan, successful DC 15 Spot checks reveal a mixed group of villagers and caravan guards leading Nine-Fingers into the caravan's encampment late at night.

Enslaved: The caravan travels with a great treasure in cargo, which it protects and conceals very carefully. The lone enclosed wagon stays under a strict watch, and the guards turn back anyone who approaches the wagon—with force, if necessary. Wood and cured leather form the wagon's sides, but it seems strangely quiet, traveling without a sound—not even a wheel creaking.

The wagon holds a half-dozen slaves, including a few captured Skydancer elves caught by wandering slavers who later traded them to the caravan. House Tsalaxa uses the *acceptance* power to make the slaves docile, while keeping the entire wagon under a *silence* spell at all times. Nobody in the village knows what the wagon contents are, although most assume it carries something of great value.

Missing: Several hardy ex-slaves who do all the hunting for the village failed to return from a hunting expedition several days ago. The villagers fear a sandstorm or some desert predator caught the hunters. Without these hunters, many villagers face starvation.

A band of Skydancers ambushed the hunters, capturing two and leaving three for dead. One of the three came to and wandered blindly in the desert for a day before stumbling upon some ruins partially covered by a massive sand dune. Seeking solace from the oppressive heat within the ruins, the surviving hunter inadvertently opened the door to the World Serpent Inn and fell unconscious. The PCs might stumble across the hunter in the back halls of the inn, leading them back to Athas (once they rouse and question the survivor).

Upon crossing into Athas, the party finds signs of the battle site, including the slain hunters' remains. Tracking the elves and their prisoners requires a DC 20 Survival check. At the end of the trail, the party finds two of the prisoners staked out under the sun, waiting for heatstroke or desert predators to take them. The hunters are delirious, but they speak of angry

DERLAN

elves. The elves believe the villagers captured some of their tribesmen (it was actually a group of wandering slavers who traded them to the caravan) and interrogated the hunters for hours before leaving them to die.

NEW PSIONIC POWER

Psionics are even more prevalent on Athas than magic is on normal worlds. As such, the people of Athas continue to develop new ways of adapting magic to psionics.

Acceptance

Telepathy (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Telepath 2
Display: Material and mental
Manifesting Time: 1 round
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Points: 3

Your subject twitches slightly as a set of ectoplasmic manacles forms around his wrists and neck. As the manacles fade from view, his emotions dim and he becomes more relaxed.

As *calm emotions* (*Player's Handbook*, 207), except as noted here.

Augment: For every 2 additional power points you spend, this power's save DC increases by 1 and the duration increases by 1 hour. For every 2 additional power points you spend, this power can affect an additional target. Any additional targets cannot be more than 15 feet from another target of this power.

NEW FEATS

All arcane spellcasters on Athas have the ability to defile, killing what little plant life still exists. The following feat emulates the act of defiling. For a more extensive version of defiling, see DRAGON #315.

Defiler

You can power your spells using energy stolen from plants around you

Prerequisite: Ability to cast 1st-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You may draw the life force of plants around you in an act known as defiling. Casting a spell with defiling magic increases the caster level of the spell by +1. A spell cast with defiling magic takes longer to cast. If the spell's casting time is a standard action or less, its casting time increases to 1 round. If the spell's casting time is measured in rounds, its casting time increases by 1 round. If the spell's casting time is measured in minutes, its casting time increases by 1 minute. If the spell's casting time is measured in hours, its casting time increases by 1 hour.

You may only use defiling magic to enhance arcane spells cast with an arcane spellcasting class. You cannot, for example, use defiling magic to cast a cleric's domain spell that also appears on an arcane spellcasting class's spell list.

When you defile, you instantly destroy all plant life (but not plant creatures) in a radius of 5 feet per level of the spell. A 0-level spell defiles a single 5-foot square. The defiled area becomes completely sterile and can never again support plant life. Only a carefully worded *miracle* can reverse this permanent sterility.

In an area without plant life (such as an area in which you already used defiler magic once before), any spell you cast with defiling magic fails and you lose the spell.

Special: You cannot cast arcane spells on Athas unless you possess this feat, even if you intend on never defiling. Wizards native to Athas gain this feat as a bonus feat when they gain their first level of wizard.

NEW WEAPON

Over the years, the elves of Athas have developed a new type of weapon that allows them to use their various strengths to greatest advantage.

Elven Longblade

The elven longblade is fashioned from a long shank of animal bone and sharpened along one edge. The length and the curve of the bone make it resemble a longer version of a scimitar or rapier. You may use the Weapon Finesse feat with the elven longblade to apply your Dexterity modifier, rather than your Strength modifier, on attack rolls.

New Weapon

Exotic Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Weight	Type
One-Handed Melee Weapon						
Elven longblade	60 cp*	1d6	1d8	18–20/x2	4	Slashing

* Ceramic pieces, the equivalent of gold pieces (gp) in most worlds.

Scavengers of Istar

by Cam Banks • illustrated by Peter Bergting • cartography by Sean Macdonald

War and disaster provide a stark backdrop to many of the heroic stories that play out in the world of Krynn. While knights, dragons, and mysterious wizards are arguably the setting's iconic elements, it is the courage, faith, and hope of its heroes in the face of tremendous adversity that characterize DRAGONLANCE. The events of the Legends trilogy by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, and the Kingpriest trilogy by Chris Pierson, tell the stories of the time-traveling twins Raistlin and Caramon, the Kingpriest Beldinas Pilofiro, and the fall of mighty Istar. But theirs are not the only storylines woven into this time of doom and divine providence.

In the typical DRAGONLANCE campaign, the Cataclysm is a distant memory, an event that signified the end of the Age of Might and marked the beginning of the Age of Despair. It is a reminder of the dangers of hubris and narrow-minded righteousness. Perhaps because of its pivotal and cosmological importance, it is the only time and place the World Serpent Inn opens to the world of Krynn, as normally no amount of magic allows travel to or from the world. It is a time of impending disaster, offering numerous opportunities for courage, faith, hope—but, more importantly, it offers the opportunity for a mad scramble for Istar's wealth before the city is destroyed forever.

Istar: Doomed City of the Kingpriest

The Lordcity of Istar, center of the world and Imperial seat of the Kingpriest, is a magnificent spectacle with its alabaster towers, marble courtyards, golden domes, and crystal minarets. Its reputation is one of purity, although this is clearly superficial; beneath the surface of Istar lies a sea of decadence and moral squalor thinly veiled from the eyes of the pilgrims thronging the streets.

Istar

Istar (metropolis): Magical; AL LG; 100,000 gp limit; Assets 24,750,000,000 gp; Population 495,000; Isolated (96% human, 2% elf, 1% dwarf, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: **Beldinas Pilofiro,** LG male human cleric 20 (Kingpriest of Istar); **Lord Tithian,** LG male human fighter 9/paladin 6 (Grand Marshal of the Knights of the Divine Hammer, currently absent).

Important Characters: **Quarath,** LN male Silvanesti elf aristocrat 4/cleric 12 (emissary of Silvanesti; unable to cast spells); **Fistandantilus,** CE male human wizard 7/Wizard of High Sorcery 10/archmage 5 (mage of the Black Robes); **Highbulp Gorge III,** N male gully dwarf aristocrat 8 (supreme ruler of the Aghar of Istar).

Knights of the Divine Hammer: Led by Grand Marshal Tithian, these elite knights serve at the pleasure of the Kingpriest and deliver his justice and theocratic law upon the Empire's population.

Imperial Scatas: The common footmen and soldiers of the Imperial army. Every legion is led by at least one Knight of the Divine Hammer.

Notes: Istar is presently beset by storms and inclement weather. Wind, hail, and rain have lashed at the city and the surrounding region for ten days and continues to do so until day three of the scavenger hunt (see Ferret Snitchwhistle's Worlds-Famous Scavenger Hunt for more information). It is also winter, although Istar has a fairly moderate climate; evening temperatures drop to as low as 30 degrees, while daytime temperatures reach a high of 60 degrees.

Istar and the World Serpent Inn

The World Serpent Inn opens upon Istar via a single portal. Deep in the maze of the Inn's back halls, this portal lies behind a rather unassuming wooden door, next to which is a kiosk run by a shifty-eyed kender. The kender is Ferret Snitchwhistle, organizer of Ferret Snitchwhistle's Worlds-Famous Scavenger Hunt. On Krynn, the wooden doorway opens onto Six Sword Square, a plaza with a fountain close to the center of the city. The portal has specific opening and closing times, linked to Ferret's "curse," so any visitors to the world of Krynn from the World Serpent Inn find it to be a one-way trip unless they gather the items Ferret recruits them to find.

Ferret Snitchwhistle's Worlds-Famous Scavenger Hunt

Three days before the Cataclysm when, in his hubris, the Kingpriest foolishly dares to command the gods and is punished for it, mysterious forces transpire to create an opening from Istar to unknown reaches that lie beyond the Gate of Souls. At the other end of that portal is the World Serpent Inn, a place unknown to Krynn's scholars and only touching their world for the course of three days.

Meeting Ferret Snitchwhistle

Ferret Snitchwhistle (N male afflicted kender rogue 10) is a member of Krynn's halflinglike race known for its curiosity and fearlessness. Ferret has lost the almost supernatural connection to his home that bolsters the courage and attitude of other kender. Trapped in an endlessly repeating loop and forced to bear witness to the Cataclysm time and time again, Ferret is no longer immune to fear nor filled with wonder and childlike innocence. Ferret escaped Krynn by stumbling through the portal to the World Serpent Inn. Now, he brings others into his curse, hoping they can achieve what he has so far failed to do: make amends for a crime he unwittingly committed.

Adventure Seeds: Adventurers might run into Ferret at any time in the World Serpent Inn. He might be in the common room, trying to recruit other patrons, or sitting at his kiosk in the back halls of the inn, waiting for a band of scavenger hunters to return. Ferret's pitch is quite simple. "Through the door," he says, "there is a city of great riches. In three days time, it will be destroyed forever by the hammer of the gods, but in the meantime those brave souls who venture through can win treasures beyond imagining." Oddly enough, it is always three days before the end. Once Istar is destroyed, the portal resets itself to the morning three days before the end. Ferret, of course, doesn't tell the adventurers that, nor does he tell them that, when they pass through the door, they won't be coming back until they've found everything they need to.

If a band of hunters agrees to Ferret's terms (bring back "a couple of things" he wants; they keep the rest), Ferret hands them a list of items and a map. This list is always the same, because they are the five *Icons of Symeon* Ferret "borrowed" shortly before the Cataclysm from the Great Temple and the source of his curse. The map is one of Tasslehoff Burrfoot's original maps of the city, apparently drawn by the famous kender hero years after he returned from his time traveling. When they are ready, Ferret opens the door with a key and ushers the adventurers into the rain-swept streets of Istar.

Trapped in Istar

Once the door from the World Serpent Inn closes on the Krynn side, it

does not open again until the scavenger hunters succeed. Success in this case is determined by acquiring all five of Ferret's listed items, the *Icons of Symeon*, which are scattered across the city of Istar. Bringing all five icons together enables the wooden door in Six Sword Square to open once again, while proving moderately useful in the meantime as magic items in their own right.

Adventure Seeds: The scavenger hunt itself is a freeform, limited-duration adventure you can handle any way you like. Given a city on the brink of destruction and a list of five items to locate that could be anywhere at all, you have a very broad canvas upon which to paint the specifics of the hunt. The most basic approach is to assign locations to all five icons and have the PCs find their way around over the course of three days, until the earthquakes that start during the evening of the second day and the strike of the Fiery Mountain at midday on the third day. The PCs must find their way back to Six Sword Square, dodging panicked citizens, aggressive knights, and falling buildings. Ideally, the portal to the World Serpent Inn is there, but unless they have all five icons it doesn't open. If they don't get the icons in time, or they wander too far from Istar for some reason, they stand a good chance of being trapped on Krynn during the most pivotal and catastrophic event of its history.

A Return to the World Serpent

Assuming the PCs recover all of the icons and pass back through the door in Six Sword Square to the Inn, Ferret wants what he asked for. With the icons, Ferret can at last go through the portal himself when it resets, return the icons to the Great Temple, and free himself from his curse. Whether this means the portal closes forever or remains open to Krynn (perhaps at a different time and place) is up to you. It's also possible that Ferret doesn't want to part with the icons and attempts to flee the World Serpent Inn via portals to other worlds. If this happens, the icons disappear again, Ferret wakes up to find himself back in the inn, and the curse continues.

Beyond the Age of Might

Best known as a world of war, the heroes and villains of Krynn have become legends in numerous realms and eras. For more information on the world of DRAGONLANCE—throughout its various ages—the campaign setting lives on at **dragonlance.com** and in print through the works of Sovereign Press. Besides the hardcover *DRAGONLANCE Campaign Setting* and *Bestiary of Krynn*, Sovereign Press has also recently compiled, updated, and released the classic TSR adventures that launched the campaign setting in *Dragons of Autumn: War of the Lance Chronicles, Volume I*. You can also find recent rules for playing bozak draconians as PCs in *DRAGON* #315 and take an in-depth look at the lives of these foul dragon-spawn in *DRAGON* #339's "The Ecology of the Draconian."

Notable Locations in Istar

The following locations represent just a few of the landmarks and places of interest to visitors and make ideal destinations for scavengers. Istar is enormous and covers a much larger area than Tasslehoff's map would indicate, so this list is by no means exhaustive.

Arena of Games

Together with the Great Temple and the Tower of High Sorcery, the Arena of Games is numbered among the most famous and oft-visited sites in the Lordcity of Istar. It is an arena for gladiatorial combat, seating 80,000 people on the busiest days. The gladiators themselves, and their trainers, live adjacent to the Arena in dedicated housing.

Adventure Seeds: Despite ten days of constant storms and rain, the crowds continue to attend the daily games. If one of the *Icons of Symeon* is here, it could be hidden in the rows of seats, stowed in a noble's private box, or even worn by one of the gladiators.

The Great Temple

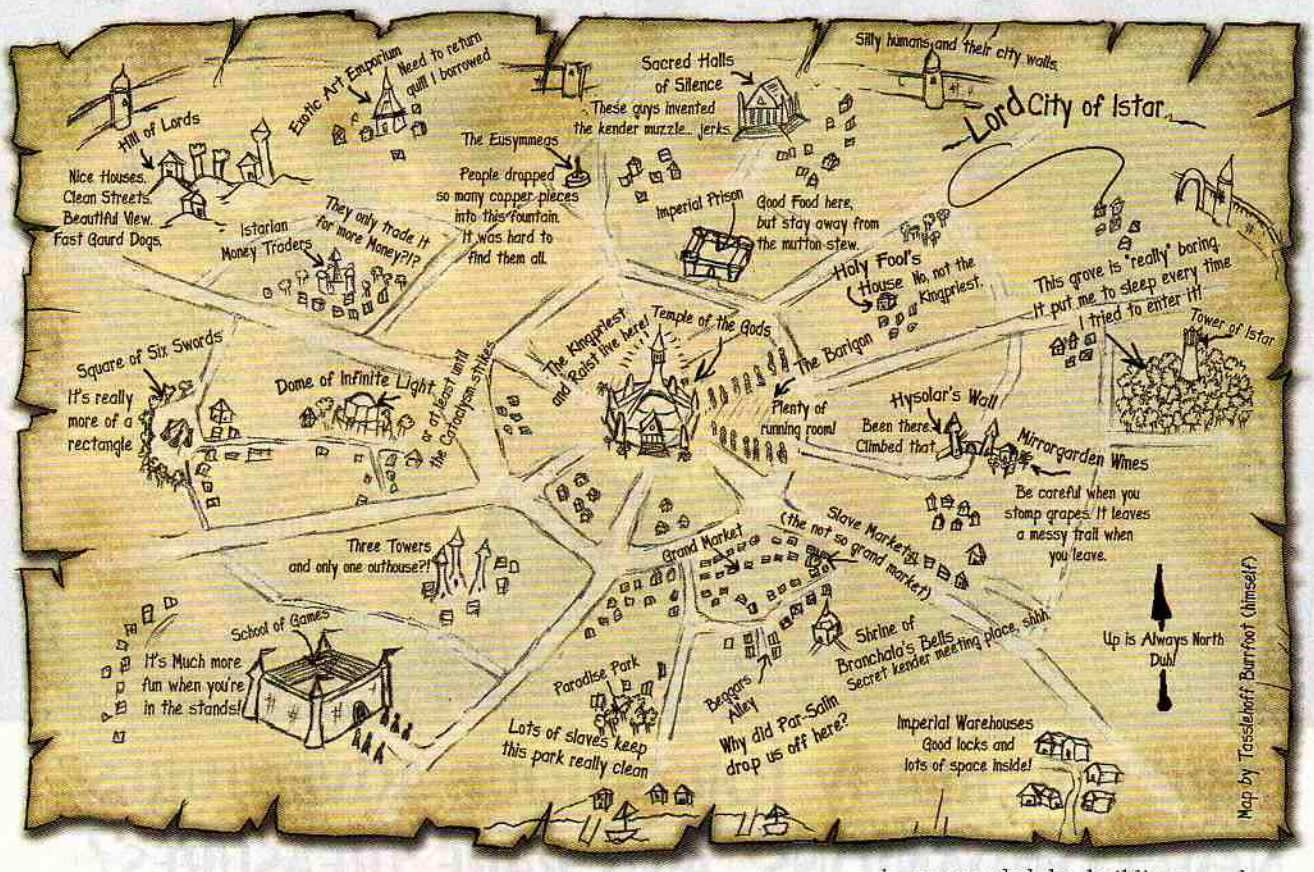
For almost three centuries, Istar has been ruled by the Kingpriests, the Chosen of the Gods. Some scholars claim that Paladine, greatest of the Gods of Light, personally chose every one of them. Others scoff at this and compare the Kingpriests to every other emperor or king, as vulnerable to the lures of power and greed as any man. In the case of Beldinas the Lightbringer, greatest of his office, it is the determination to rid the world of all evils that leads him to ruin. With the holy crown *Miceram* upon his brow, Beldinas appears a radiant beacon of goodness to all who see him, but in truth he is a frail and frightened man.

The Great Temple itself boasts a 600-foot spire above the famous basilica and a maze of marble and alabaster hallways that lead off into reliquaries, minor chapels, meditation chambers, and cloisters. Knights of the Divine Hammer serve as temple guards, and priests and religious officials are always in sight. Decorative gold, crystal, and platinum fixtures make this a temple-robber's dream, though no resident of the city would ever think to abscond with anything from here.

Adventure Seeds: A visit to the Great Temple during the last three days of Istar can be both a sobering experience and a confusing one. There are no more clerics in the city—at least, none the player characters encounter—and therefore all remaining Revered Sons and Daughters of Paladine have no capacity for using magic or channeling positive energy.

Imperial Prison

A large building, the prison was constructed of mighty granite blocks carried from the mountains to the west and erected 118 years ago as a response to the Kingpriest Vasari II's


Silly humans and their city walls.
Lord City of Istar
Hill of Lords
Nice Houses. Clean Streets. Beautiful View. Fast Gaurd Dogs.
Exotic Art Emporium
Need to return quill I borrowed
Sacred Halls of Silence
These guys invented the kender muzzle... jerks.
The Eusymmeas
People dropped so many copper pieces into this fountain. It was hard to find them all.
Istarian Money Traders
They only trade it for more Money?!?
Imperial Prison
Good Food here, but stay away from the mutton-stew.
Holy Fool's House
No, not the Kingpriest.
This grove is "really" boring. It put me to sleep every time I tried to enter it!
Tower of Istar
Square of Six Swords
It's really more of a rectangle
Dome of Infinite Light
...at least until the Cataclysm strikes.
The Kingpriest and Raistlin here!
Temple of the Gods
The Barigon
Plenty of running room!
Hysolar's Wall
Been there. Climbed that.
Mirrorgarden Wines
Be careful when you stomp grapes. It leaves a messy trail when you leave.
Three Towers and only one outhouse?!
Grand Market
Slave Market (the not so grand market)
School of Games
It's Much more fun when you're in the stands!
Paradise Park
Lots of slaves keep this park really clean
Beggars Alley
Why did Par-Salin drop us off here?
Shrine of Branchala's Bells
Secret kender meeting place, shhh.
Up is Always North Duh!
Imperial Warehouses
Good locks and lots of space inside!
Map by Tasslehoff Burrfoot (himself!)

The Araifas

The most insidious and dangerous threat to the hunt are the Araifas, or Thought-Readers. The Araifas are the Kingpriest's secret police, former clerics and monks of Majere who make use of items such as *medallions of thoughts* and *candles of truth* to uncover potential plots against the Kingpriest. Unfortunately, many of the Araifas are themselves corrupt and power-hungry, so hundreds of innocents have been captured or killed.

Adventure Seeds: Use the Araifas to really emphasize just how rigid and theocratic the city is, even during these final days. If the PCs are captured, they are taken to the Imperial Prison for interrogation and "processing," which should be all the impetus the PCs need to make their escape attempts.

It might also be appropriate to have a number of the Araifas blocking the PCs' escape to the World Serpent Inn, having uncovered the PCs' plan and gathering in Six Sword Square minutes before the Fiery Mountain hits the city.

Proclamation of Manifest Virtue. Most of its inmates are nonhumans—elves, dwarves, minotaurs, the occasional ogre, and hundreds of kender—awaiting trials that never come. Like every other building in the city, the Imperial Prison is majestic and radiant on the outside, but on the inside it is filthy, brutal, and dangerous.

Adventure Seeds: The prison makes a good site for a quick adventure, either as the destination for the scavenger hunt or as the location of a player character-inspired prison break. Breaking in is easier than breaking out, although neither is pleasant.

Six Sword Square

Unlike the Plaza of the *Eusymmeas* or the Barigon (the courtyard before the Great Temple), Six Sword Square is surrounded by buildings made of red brick and tile, with windows looking down upon the fountain in the square's center, and numerous alleyways leading away from it. Rising out of the fountain are six stone arms, each holding aloft a slender blade. As the confluence of a number of streets in this residential quarter of the city, Six Sword Square is well-known, if a little out of the way.

Adventure Seeds: Six Sword Square's best worst-kept secret is that it is a nexus of hidden passages, underground entrances, secret doors, and more. If one of the *Icons of Symeon* is hidden away in Six Sword Square, it could be behind any number of concealed doors or with a resident of the square, perhaps even without his knowledge.

Tower of High Sorcery

Once, the mighty Tower of High Sorcery in Istar housed hundreds of robed wizards who served the city. As time went on and the reign of the Kingpriests became characterized by suspicion of magic, the wizards

The Icons of Symeon (Minor Artifacts)

Each *icon* is a half-inch-thick plate of a precious metal, around 5 inches square, with a true dragon of matching type emblazoned on one side. The icons have a hardness of 10 and 30 hit points. Each has a small hole at the center of one edge, suitable for threading a chain through in order to wear the icon around the neck. If this is done, the icon takes up an amulet slot, although more than one icon may be worn on a single chain; their effects stack.

Brass: This icon has a brass dragon depicted on it. When worn the icon provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity.

Bronze: This icon bears the image of a bronze dragon on the front. When worn, the icon provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom.

Copper: This icon's image is that of a copper dragon. When worn, the icon provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma.

Gold: A gold dragon is engraved on the front of this icon. When worn, the icon provides a +2 luck bonus on all saving throws.

Silver: This icon is engraved with the regal image of a silver dragon. When worn, the icon allows the use of the *disguise self* spell.

When all five icons are brought together, they can be worn on a single chain to gain all the listed effects, or fitted together to form a kind of cube or box. This box may be filled with water, which the box makes holy (as the *bless water* spell); this may be done three times a day. The primary use for the assembled *Icons of Symeon* is redemption, however. The icons may be used to cast *atonement* on a single individual once per day, who must place a hand within the box and confess his or her guilt.

Strong abjuration, transmutation; CL 16th.

grew less active within the city and kept to themselves for fear of persecution. After the Last Battles, when Istar unleashed its paranoia upon the Wizards of High Sorcery, the Kingpriest has renamed the Tower *Solio Febelas*, or Hall of Sacrilege. No wizards remain inside today. Instead, the tower now houses all of the magic items and artifacts the Divine Hammers have seized for the Kingpriest, safe behind magically strengthened walls and a grove of olive trees that causes all who enter it to lose their memories.

Adventure Seeds: Because it contains hundreds of relics and artifacts, the Tower is extremely well guarded. The Balakan Grove, which brings about a magical memory loss (DC 25 Will save or take 1 point of Intelligence and Charisma damage each round, as well as lose all memory of the last 10 minutes) is the best defense the tower possesses, although greater stone golems are also reported to wander the halls within. If one of the *Icons of Symeon* is located here, it might be easier for the icon to be buried in the Grove.

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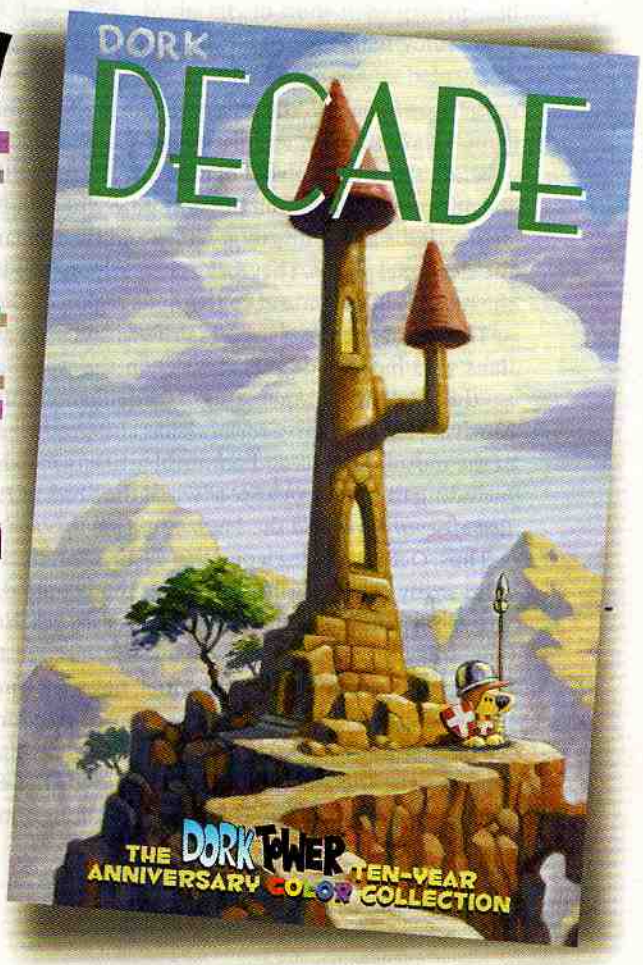


GREYHAWK® ADVENTURES

IRONGATE:
City of Stairs

by Gary Holian and Denis Tetreault • illustrated by John Gravato

Oerth, better known as the World of Greyhawk, is a highly magical place with many connections to the myriad planes of existence. Its naturally deep magic draws the attention of many powerful beings, from demon lords and saints to godlings and the monarchs of the elemental planes. They focus primarily on the Flanaess, the most well-known and contentious region of Oerth.

The history of the Flanaess is rife with heroes and villians who have made their marks on the world as well as the Multiverse, including Mordenkainen, Iggwilv, Murlynd, and Robilar. Greyhawk has also produced some of the most infamous and powerful artifacts in existence, including the *Hand* and *Eye of Vecna*, the *Crook of Rao*, the *Rod of Seven Parts*, and the *Machine of Lum the Mad*.

Thus, Oerth remains a popular destination for visitors from many other worlds, including the clientèle of the World Serpent Inn. The inn is believed to reach out to only a few places on Oerth, including the Free City of Greyhawk. Its most intriguing outlet, however, underlies the unique city of Irongate. A bastion of freedom in a sea of tyranny and oppression, the fortress-city has long captured the imaginations of the people of the eastern Flanaess. From its perilous perch in the hills above the Azure Sea, it has long drawn adventurers from the length and breadth of the Flanaess to its formidable walls.

THE FREE CITY OF IRONGATE

The City of Irongate is a walled metropolis located on a short isthmus of undulating land that joins the Iron Hills to the Onnwal Headlands. It was built more than four centuries ago, during the height of the Great Kingdom, to extend the Aerdi's influence to the Azure Sea and exploit the mineral resources of the region. The enormous and ambitious design of the fortress-city represented the first large-scale cooperation between men and dwarves in the Flanaess and has served as a home to both ever since.

Framed by an imposing set of hills on a sheltered bay, Irongate rises on a steep mesalike rock. The hills on either side of the city are pockmarked with entrances to a vast network of mines, many of which remain active. The city crests high above these surroundings, its concentric stone walls with their crenellated towers rising to greater and greater heights. Its spires, especially the central Cidereal Citadel, the Tower of Daern, and the southeastern Siren Keep, dominate all approaches.

The edifices visible on approach represent only a fraction of Irongate's total size. For every foot Irongate reaches to the sky, it delves twice as deep into the earth, forming the famous Undercity of Irongate—the city within a city that is home to a majority of Irongate's dwarves and a significant portion of other citizens. The city boasts as many as a dozen different sublevels interconnected by seemingly endless sets of stone stairs and passages. Some of Irongate's buildings have entrances or storefronts both above and below ground. Underground levels also contain inns, smithies, and even magic shops.

The city has few defined quarters and professions mix well throughout the tiered fortress. The notable exceptions are the central Civic Ward, containing the houses of government; the Tower Ward, housing many of Irongate's wealthier citizenry; and the low-lying Dock Ward to the south.

Irongate is now a free city, but wasn't always so. Previously branded the "Overking's Armory," its world-famous weaponsmiths and enchanters worked the abundant (and sometimes unique) high-quality ores mined in the region. This famed city of crafters ran afoul of the Malachite Throne during the Turmoil Between Crowns. It was besieged more than 150 years ago but survived to lead an alliance—called the Iron League—opposed to the Overking's tyranny. Irongate's current leader is Cobb Darg, an enigmatic man who has managed to keep the city safe for decades despite constant threats. A Council of Wardens aids him in this task, each selected to oversee limited portions of the city, from the sunlit spires to the foundations of the Undercity where the infamous Deep Doors lie.

The Deep Doors

It's widely suspected that the bowels of Irongate contain a connection to the Underdark. In town, people mutter of the "Deep Doors," but only a tiny fraction of Irongate's residents have seen them, much less passed through. These doors can only be reached after a lengthy journey through the city's underground storehouses, past the catacombs, to where a broad passage ends in a single massive door a dozen feet tall and wide. Beyond the door, a gently sloping 300-foot-long passage ends in an identical door. Together, these comprise the Deep Doors, guarded at all times by a squad of dwarves and a team of city wizards.

Terror in the Dark

The city of Irongate is a familiar place to many planar travelers who frequent the World Serpent Inn. These visitors are often quiet in their dealings so as to avoid any unwanted attention. This is, unfortunately, not always the case. A powerful fiend crossed through into the tunnels underneath the city some months ago. After getting a feel for the environment, it has begun stalking miners, travelers, and merchants alike in the deep passages. Miners are refusing to work until the problem is dealt with and mayor Darg has sent representatives back to the World Serpent Inn in hopes of finding someone more apt to deal with the problem. If recruited to help, the PCs will need the help of Tuaren Leedstit to track down the fiend.

The Deep Doors are iron, sheathed in precious adamantine, and more than 2 feet thick. They are impervious to magical attack (such as *knock* and *disintegrate*). Although the outer door has withstood heavy battering in the past, it evinces only minor scratches. A guardhouse, with controls for a system of counterweights that draws the heavy doors open and shut, watches the area inside both doors. Carefully engineered, the inner door to the Undercity cannot open so long as the outer door remains ajar.

The area between the Deep Doors is a no-man's-land where travelers to and from the Underdark and Irongate must wait for access to the other side. A few side passages lead to chambers containing rest areas, meeting chambers, and a handful of establishments. A tiny hamlet thrives there, where merchants can conduct trade or explorers can launch expeditions into the Underdark.

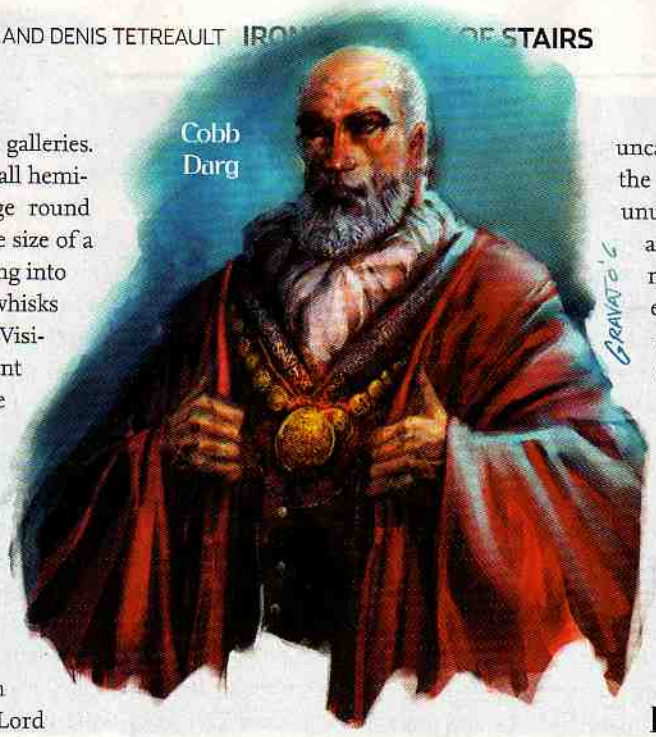
Helkam's Pit

In the limbo between the Deep Doors sits a unique establishment, the "inn at the bottom of the world," operated by an irascible dwarf named Dygren. The inn's namesake, Helkam, was a dissident of the dwarven Dorgrimm clan, which rules the Kingdom of the Iron Hills east of Irongate. The Dorgrimm are rivals of the Grummild clan, the most populous in Irongate. Helkam was an adventurer who passionately searched for the "big find." He never found it, but while excavating a shaft, long before the construction of the Deep Doors, he stumbled on a vein of ore with remarkable color and properties. After years of trying to get a wizard in the city to study it, he gave up and is thought to have died somewhere in the inky dark passages below.

The Undercity eventually grew closer to his find and a dwur named Dygren surfaced to stake a claim to the site as Helkam's heir. He furnished a tavern, funded by a generous but anonymous patron, with a large chamber cut around the central find. The excavation left a glimmering shard still visible in the taproom, where miners, adventurers, and other more exotic beings from the Underdark gather. Wizards suspect that some property of this unusual stone aids in the creation of extradimensional structures, such as gates. Indeed, the wizard Bigby paid handsomely for a huge chunk of the stuff a decade ago.

The Pit contains Irongate's link to the World Serpent Inn. Discovered only a few years ago, those who know of its existence aren't quick to share it. On the far side of the taproom, a handful

of passages lead to private galleries. One passage winds to a small hemispheric room with a large round table and a fissure twice the size of a man on the far wall. Stepping into the darkness of the crevice whisks one away from this world. Visitors from the World Serpent Inn emerge from the same place—something, no doubt, the city fathers of Irongate would be none too happy to learn.



Cobb Darg

Irongate's greatest enigma might not be an object or place, but an individual. For a man, the Lord Mayor is unusually short (under 5 feet) and stocky, but his wile and wisdom is legendary. No one has an exact accounting of his profession or skills, although common knowledge says he worked in the Iron League as a diplomat and spy before a short stint as a City Warden. Darg has apparently lived a very long life, being reelected to the mayoralty of Irongate in 590 CY for his fifth successive 10-year term. Darg has been a member of the inner sanctum of the Iron League for as long as any man in that secret society can remember, with only the elves of Sunndi or the Dwarflords of the Iron Hills remembering a time before him. And thus the mystery surrounding his background continues to grow.

One of the more prevalent theories claims Darg is a human with dwarven heritage, explaining his appearance and long life, and illuminating his great affinity and alliance with the dwarven enclaves bordering Irongate. His wisdom comes from having lived before the Turmoil Between Crowns, secretly working as a member of the Iron League since its inception—and indeed perhaps its founding. Others say Darg is really a dragon, one of the last inhabitants of the Headlands, who lives polymorphed as a man. He cherishes this region so much, he willfully engages in this charade to protect Irongate's mysteries, revealing his true form to a very few. Finally, others say Darg is in fact a human—a wizard, scholar, or sage who has learned some great secret that has afforded him unnaturally long life and the foresight to protect Irongate and defeat its enemies in ways others could not. The truth is still anyone's guess.

Tuaren Leedstit

In a place as steeped in magic as Oerth, it's not surprising that wondrous materials abound. Many travelers to this world hope to find these raw materials, some known only to the finest craftsmen of Irongate. Whether the interest is in "mundane" ores such as gold, platinum, mithral, or adamantine, or in wondrous materials such as oerthblood or dweomite, one of the world's foremost experts is Tuaren Leedstit, sage and geologist (NG male gnome expert 9). Travelers from the far corners of the Flanaess and beyond have sought out Tuaren for his expertise. Over the years, he has collected many of Oerth's most unusual and rare substances, has crawled through many of Irongate's working and abandoned mines, and can be a valuable source of information for would-be explorers. Tuaren occasionally hires adventurers to explore dangerous areas or to accompany him on expeditions. He has an uncanny ability for finding the smallest deposits of any unusual or rare substances and his knowledge of Oerth minerals, and to a lesser extent otherworldly materials, is encyclopedic. Miners often pay well for his advice on where to mine and give him free access to all of the mines in the region. He can often be seen wandering about clutching strange tools, disorganized notes, and rock samples.

Bolvain Gottidor's Dead Forge

Irongate has hundreds of small forges in the city and undercity, but the long-abandoned Dead Forge of Gottidor is probably the best known. A single passageway on one of the deep levels leads to a complex consisting of a central workshop, several smaller workrooms and storage rooms, an office, and a cluster of living spaces. Bolvain Gottidor was a brilliant and ambitious student of the art of weaponsmithing, having studied under several of Irongate's most skilled masters. When he opened his own shop, many believed he would become the greatest of all smiths. With his unusual and ornate forge, Gottidor began turning out amazing masterwork weapons and his reputation soared. Bolvain, however, would not be satisfied. He began work on his masterpieces: a trio of swords of unsurpassed craftsmanship. His fortunes soon turned. A series of terrible freak accidents devastated his shop. His workers were gravely wounded and two of his sons were found cut to pieces. Still, the obsessed smith continued to work on his masterpieces. Rumors of curses began circulating the city. His clients disappeared and his remaining workers abandoned him. Shortly thereafter, he claimed to have finished the blades, but a small cave-in—something virtually unheard of in Irongate's

The Third Blade

A mysterious patron hidden behind powerful illusions waits for powerful adventurers in the World Serpent Inn with a lucrative offer. This individual has recovered two of the three wondrous blades created by Bolvain and seeks the third. Apparently incapable of traveling to Irongate, the patron will pay handsomely for the last blade. If the characters agree, their patron tells them the third blade was discovered some years ago and was taken to the Underdark beneath the city of Irongate, where it fell into the hands of a powerful mind flayer warrior. Recovering the Oerth-blooded blade requires a lengthy trek through the lightless depths with a deadly enemy at the journey's end. Even if successful, it soon becomes apparent that the three blades together might form the most powerful weapon ever made, which leads to questions about their occluded patron.

Oerthblood

Weapons and armor must be made of a specific alloy of Oerthblood, known mostly to the artificers and smiths of Irongate, to gain the following benefits. Only primarily metallic objects gain these bonuses.

Weapons

Weapons made primarily from Oerthblood grant a +1 luck bonus on attack and damage rolls. A target that takes damage from an oerthblooded weapon takes a –1 penalty on all saves made against magical effects for 1 round. Penalties from multiple hits stack.

Armor

Light Armor: DR 1/—, +1 luck bonus on saves vs. magic effects.
Medium Armor: DR 2/—, +2 luck bonus on saves vs. magic effects.
Heavy Armor: DR 3/—, +3 luck bonus on saves vs. magical effects.

Type of Item	Item Cost Modifier
Ammunition	+150 gp
Light armor or shield	+10,000 gp
Medium armor	+20,000 gp
Heavy armor	+30,000 gp
Weapon	+6,000 gp

Oerthblooded Weapons and Armor

Oerthblooded iron, so-called "blood-iron," is an exceedingly rare and precious material, created from an amalgam of iron and oerthblood. Discovered as early as the age of Queen Ehlissa, oerthblood is a highly magical element found only on Oerth and thought by some to be the residue of creation. Oerthblood is extremely rare even on Oerth, and Irongate is one of the few locations where it can be found and forged. By reputation, it's as strong as adamantine and just as effective. Shimmering black flecks on their surface distinguishes Oerthblooded items.

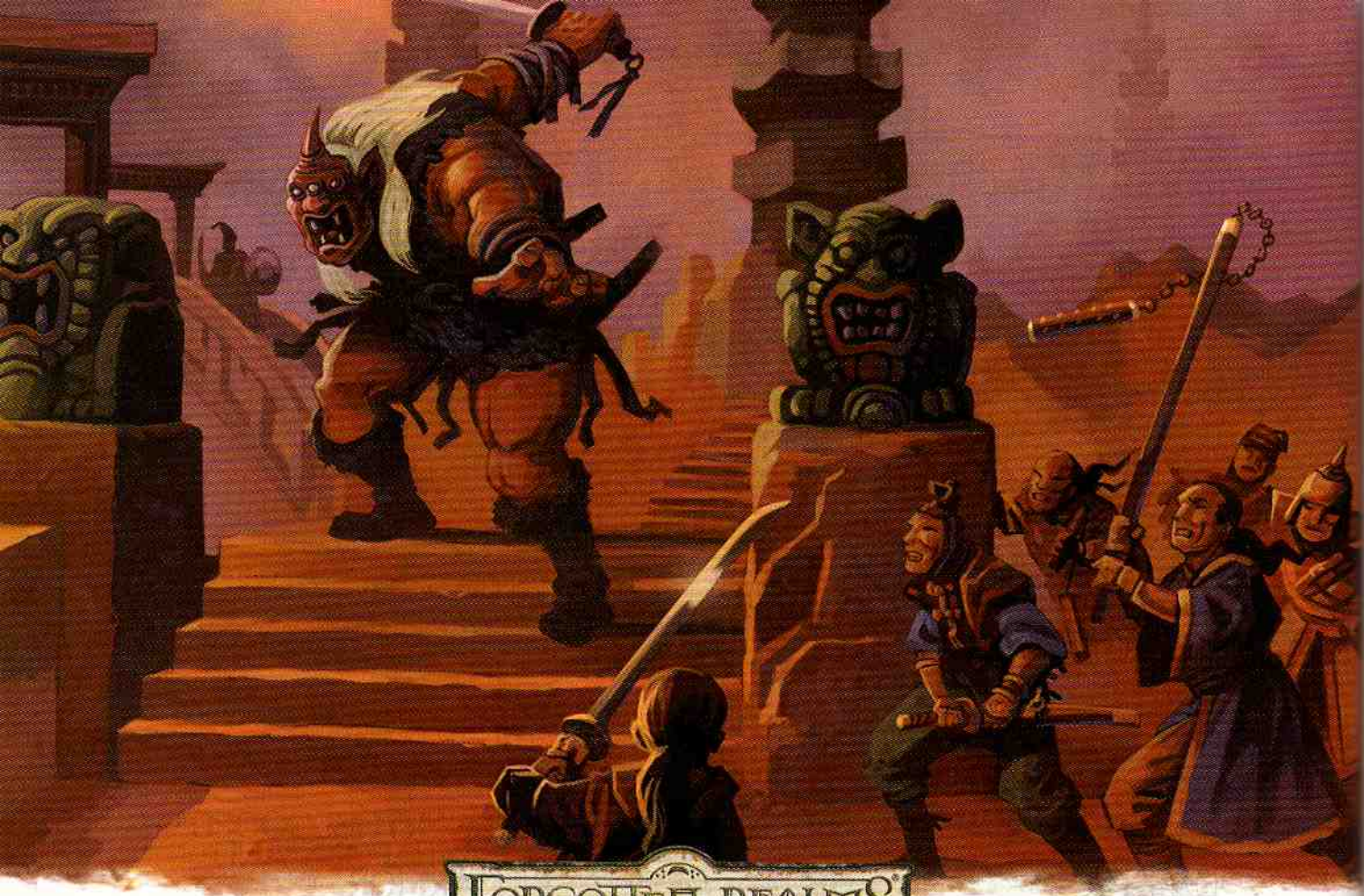
Items made from Oerthblooded metals are more easily enhanced than other substances, requiring 25% less time and XP. Due to the cost and rarity of Oerthblooded items, all are considered to be masterwork. They have twice the Hardness of the base metal the Oerthblood is alloyed with (oerthblooded iron, mithril, and steel have a Hardness of 20). Oerthblooded metal items have hit points equal to 1.5 times the hit points for a normal item of the base metal's type.

carefully worked Undercity—struck his forge. He was found just outside the entrance, split a dozen ways, with no sign of the wondrous blades.

Artificers Union of Irongate

This union is a guild of wizards and sorcerers, modest in size until the last century. Their numbers have grown aggressively ever since and they now embrace a large group of refugees from the former Iron League, including a significant handful of archmages who escaped from Idee and Onwall. Cobb Darg relies upon the guild for needed intelligence and advice in matters arcane regarding the safety of the city. Many rumors abound that they are engaged in the construction of permanent intraplanar gates to provide Irongate with a lifeline to other cities in the Flanaess. One such gate has already been completed, linking the city with the Velunian capital, Mitrik—home to the archmage Bigby.

The guild and school are housed in the Tower of Daern, built centuries ago in honor of one of the Great Kingdom's most esteemed heroes according to her own plans. It is the second-tallest structure in Irongate and plunges down at least six levels into the Undercity.



FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Kara-Tur

Cham Fau and the White Tiger Monastery

by Edward Bonny and Brian Cortijo • illustrated by Peter Bergting • cartography by Christopher West

One of the many planar doors of the World Serpent Inn leads to an unassuming tavern in the heart of the Empire of Shou Lung in the vast and majestic land of Kara-Tur. The tavern is known locally as the Inn of the Unseen Way, and it serves as a major waypoint for extraplanar travelers coming to this exotic section of Toril. The Inn of the Unseen Way stands near the city of Cham Fau, a small city reknowned for training masterful martial artists, serving as a starting point for all that Kara-Tur has to offer.

OVERVIEW OF CHAM FAU

The port city of Cham Fau is situated in a lush valley along the southern bank of the Hungtse River. It was built on a broad floodplain to encourage rice farming. Visitors to Cham Fau find the city's center a cacophony of tightly packed stone buildings, muddy streets, short bridges, and dank canals. The high hills in the southeastern region of the city contain the wealthy neighborhood of Fu Te, where Cham Fau's most influential and powerful citizens dwell in white mansions.

The ancient city is typical of most Shou Lung urban areas in that it is overseen by an aggressive imperial bureaucracy under the all-observant eye of Magistrate Ming. Ming's imperative is to keep the peace and ensure the tax revenue—garnered mostly from rice and fish sales—continues to flow to the imperial city. Ming is an effective ruler, publicly championing the causes of the hot-headed peasants while granting numerous benefits to the nobles. He is not popular with Cham Fau's

traders or criminal organizations, however. As a result of numerous assassination attempts over the past few years, Ming tries to keep at least one spy in every guild, secret society, and school in the city.

World Serpent Inn: Known locally as the Inn of the Unseen Way or the Impossible Tavern, the World Serpent Inn always appears on cloudy or moonless nights along the main road leading south from central Cham Fau. During its unannounced appearances, the inn attracts bravehearted and curious folk—mostly adventurers and bored nobles. The more superstitious farmers and fisherman shun the inn and curse its strange, frequent arrival.

The World Serpent Inn has acquired a reputation for bringing unusual and bizarre visitors to Cham Fau. The inn reinforces this reputation when obviously fiendish or angelic outsiders exit the inn—usually to spectacular results. The worst incident of this nature occurred some time ago when an unknown planar prankster herded a dozen dretch through the portal. The demons fled the inn to wreak havoc throughout nearby Fu Te. After that incident, the inn acquired the ominous nickname "House of Sudden Fiends." This exposure to extraplanar creatures results in unwarranted suspicion and even violence toward most travelers from the inn. Were it not for the inn's ability to transport away from Shou Lung, it would very likely be closed by the local imperial officials.

Central Marketplace: This downtown area of the city contains T'ung Shen's Strong Steeds of Noble Birth stable, Master San Mei's House of Apothecary, Lo Fan's Magnificent House of Weapons, and the House of Chih Liao—the Court Physician. Numerous inns and taverns offering lodging are also found here. The Central Market stands near the center of the northern half of the city.

Cham Fau Garrison House : This imperial outpost, just west of the city's center, houses the magistrate's office, the city jail, the city's armory, and quarters for the city's twenty guards (LG male and female warrior 3) and their captain, Yi Yin (LG female hengeyokai fighter 9).

Compound of the Imperial Magistrate: This large, richly appointed complex contains three imperial buildings: the Main House, the Hall of Celebration, and the House of The Ever-Welcome Guest. The compound is the home of the magistrate and where the imperial court resides when it visits Cham Fau. It stands on the southeastern arm of Chin Shan Hill, just southwest of the main part of the city.

Imperial Arcanium: Home to Zo Chung Kao, wu jen advisor to the magistrate, this building serves as an imperial college to Cham Fau's small number of arcane aspirants. Those showing promise are sent to the imperial capital for further training. Zo Chung is also a secret member of the Black Chung Tao, an elite enclave of wu jen whose members believe themselves destined to shape the unenlightened world to suit their ends. He is not behind the assassination attempts on the magistrate, although many in the city wrongly suspect him of the attacks. The Arcanium is situated close to the city graveyard, which stands near a residential area southeast of the main part of the city, making it ideal for Zo Chung's necromantic spirit dealings.

Ting Shen Island: This private island north of the city, near the far shore of the Hungtse River, is home to the aged general, Kung Pao Tsuo (LG male human Shou fighter 14/monk 2), favored confidant of the last emperor. The general lives in a huge, well-defended fortress where he holds regular martial arts competitions. Kung Pao Tsuo sponsors his adoptive ward, Chen Ying Lien (LE male human Karakoza monk 6/Shou disciple 2), a man as politically ambitious as he is skilled with his fists.

CHAM FAU

Cham Fau (small city): Conventional; AL LN; 12,000 gp limit; Assets 7,742,500 gp; Population 9,863 (89% human [92% Shou, 5% Kozakurans, 3% Tuigan], 6% hengeyokai, 3% spirit-folk, 2% korobokuru). The Tuigan are described in *Dragon* #349.

Authority Figure: Magistrate Li Sung Ming (LN male human shou noble 6/monk 3).

Important Characters: Zo Chung Kao (LE male human shou wu jen 17/monk 4) Advisor to the Magistrate; Abbot Ye Fan (LN male human shou shugenja 10/monk 8) leader of the White Tiger Monastery.

THE WHITE TIGER MONASTERY

Occupying the whole of Chin Shan Hill in the southwestern corner of the city of Cham Fau, the White Tiger monastery is home to some thirty monks of the Dragon sect of the Shou-ling faith. These monks follow the Path of Enlightenment, believing that the world is arranged as the heavens are, and that the Emperor of Shou Lung is the Son of Heaven, a mirror of the Celestial Emperor.

Daily life among the White Tiger monks differs little from most other monasteries. Rising before sunrise, the monks convene in the temple for an hour of chanting and prayer. Dawn marks the beginning of the first martial arts training session of the day, focusing on strength and flexibility exercises. Breakfast follows this training, after which the monks and priests of the monastery retire to their various tasks. This work period is followed by the midday meal, after which one of the senior monks or a priest of the temple delivers a sermon or lecture concerning one or more texts from the monastery's library. The monks then retire to meditate on the elder's words for several hours. After that, they gather in groups for the second martial arts training session of the day, lasting until dusk, at which time all return to the temple for evening prayers. This is followed

by another hour of meditation, then the evening meal, where younger monks are expected to ask questions of their masters. Supper is considered the end of the day, and all members of the temple (except its guards) return to their chambers to sleep after the meal concludes.

The White Tiger Order is a part of the larger Order of the Dragon, the largest and most influential of all of Shou Lung's monastic groups. More than fifteen years ago, the former abbot of the monastery, Cho Fong, was deposed for plotting an attack on the rival temple of Kwan Ying. He has since been replaced by Ye Fan, who has restored the reputation and focus of the monastery, and has actively encouraged the Imperial Court to recognize the Grey Cat Sect of Kwan Ying as an official sect. Ye Fan is assisted by two other priests: Su Binrui (NG male Shou shaman 6) and Kong Yanlang (LN female Shou monk 5/shaman 4).

Nearly all of the inhabitants of the White Tiger monastery belong to the monk class, and most are only 1st or 2nd level. Notable students (and potential rivals for the PCs) include Mung Peipei (LG female Shou monk 3), Xe Tsumata (LN male Shou monk 5), and Fou Xing (LE female Shou monk 1/rogue 4/assassin 1).

MONASTERY LOCATION KEY

The main parts of interest within the monastery follow.

1. Main Dojo: The central room of the training building contains no furniture or fixtures except for lanterns and braziers for light, and a thin pad on the floor to prevent injuring novices when they are inevitably knocked to the ground during training.

2. Practice Halls: These rooms are employed for the training of higher martial arts forms, individual instruction, and practice with weapons beyond the abilities and understanding of lesser monks.

3. Meditation Rooms: Each of these three rooms is a simple, windowless chamber of solid wood, with a simple door separating it from the main dojo. On the outside wall of each room is an object on which the monk is meant to concentrate and, eventually, come to understand. The western room contains an empty wooden bowl, three small octagonal mirrors adorn the walls of the eastern room, and the middle room holds the *chrysanthemum blade*—and always contains at least one monk attempting to lose himself in its mysteries.

4. Library: The library of the monastery contains a great number of scrolls and books of various ages and languages, including several written tongues and alphabets not native to Shou Lung or any of its neighboring lands—these texts have been gleaned from planar travelers over the last century. The White Tiger monks believe those who reach the pinnacle of enlightenment will unlock the mysteries of the most ancient text in the library: a simple, crumbling scroll entitled *The Whisper of the Hidden Hand.*

5. Abbot's Rooms: Not as sparse as the rooms occupied by the monks of the monastery, Abbot Ye Fan and his

two attendant priests sleep, meditate, and make offerings in private within these rooms. In addition to a simple pallet bed, each priest's quarters also contains a desk for writing and reading correspondence and a small, personal shrine.

6. Lesser Immortals: These large stone statues—one male, one female—represent Rice Spirits and are believed to govern the fertility both of the temple farmlands and the overall fertility of the city of Cham Fau.

7. Temple Gardens: The small central gardens of the temple are meticulously kept and considered sacred by the order. Local legend holds that a battle between the founder of the monastery and a demon that had possessed the local magistrate occurred in the garden, but no records exist of this event.

8. Main Altar: The altar (and the surrounding temple) is dedicated to Nung Chiang, the Shou god of agriculture and fertility. No animal sacrifices are made in the temple chamber, although each wheat harvest is marked by the ceremonial threshing of wheat stalks over the altar.

9. Granary and Storehouse: This simple square edifice stores the monastery's grains, some dried fruits, and the temple's farming implements—which also serve as a makeshift armory for the monks, who are adept at turning simple tools into useful weapons.

10. Monks' Cells: Each of these cells is a simple chamber used for sleep and meditation, containing a plain straw bed and a window looking out onto the temple grounds. There is no other furniture or places for monks to keep personal effects, as they have none to speak of. The central hall doubles as the monastery's dining room, with monks sitting on the floor in the center of the building during meals.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The people of Shou Lung have discovered or developed numerous unique and powerful magic items. Examples of two such items appear here.

KARA-TUR

Beyond the Hordelands, thousands of miles from the heart of Faerûn, lies KARA-TUR, a collection of nations with an Asian feel. Originally introduced in the first edition *Oriental Adventures*, KARA-TUR became a part of the FORGOTTEN REALMS during second edition with a boxed set and a few minor supplements.

CHRYSANTHEMUM BLADE

This beautiful and elaborate longsword grants its wielder the ability to make powerful strikes against creatures not of this world.

Lore: Suspended from the wall in the central meditation hall of the White Tiger Monastery, the ancient *chrysanthemum blade* has been undisturbed for more than a century.

Description: Perfectly balanced just ahead of the chrysanthemum-shaped crossguard, this black-bladed sword is as beautiful as it is deadly. The chrysanthemum motif also appears in a series of etchings along the length of the blade, in mother-of-pearl shapes pressed into the handle, and in an etching on the bottom of the pommel.

Activation: Attacking an outsider activates the weapon's bane property. A monk who wields this weapon automatically gains the benefits of its special monk weapon ability.

Effect: The *chrysanthemum blade* is a *+1 cold iron ki focus bane versus outsiders longsword*. In addition, the sword is considered a special monk weapon for the purpose of the flurry of blows class feature.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate conjuration; CL 8th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *summon monster I*, 37,315 gp, 2,960 XP, 75 days.

Weight: 4 lb.

Price: 74,315 gp.

MONKEY HEAD TALISMAN

A *monkey head talisman* grants its wearer knowledge of obscure fighting techniques.

Lore: A dozen of these talismans are known to exist, all created by the great martial arts master Hu Sen for use when training his students. Upon retiring a few years ago, Hu Sen made gifts of the talismans to his prized pupils.

Description: These silver amulets were meticulously fashioned to appear as tiny monkey heads. Each sports two tiny emerald eyes that glow faintly when the talisman is used.

Activation: Simply putting on a *monkey head talisman* grants its wearer bonus feats.

Effect: The wearer of a *monkey head talisman* gains Deflect Arrows, Spring Attack, and Stunning Fist as bonus feats, even if he does not meet their prerequisites, for as long as the talisman is worn.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate transmutation; CL 8th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, Deflect Arrows, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, 64,000 gp, 5,120 XP, 128 days.

Weight: —.

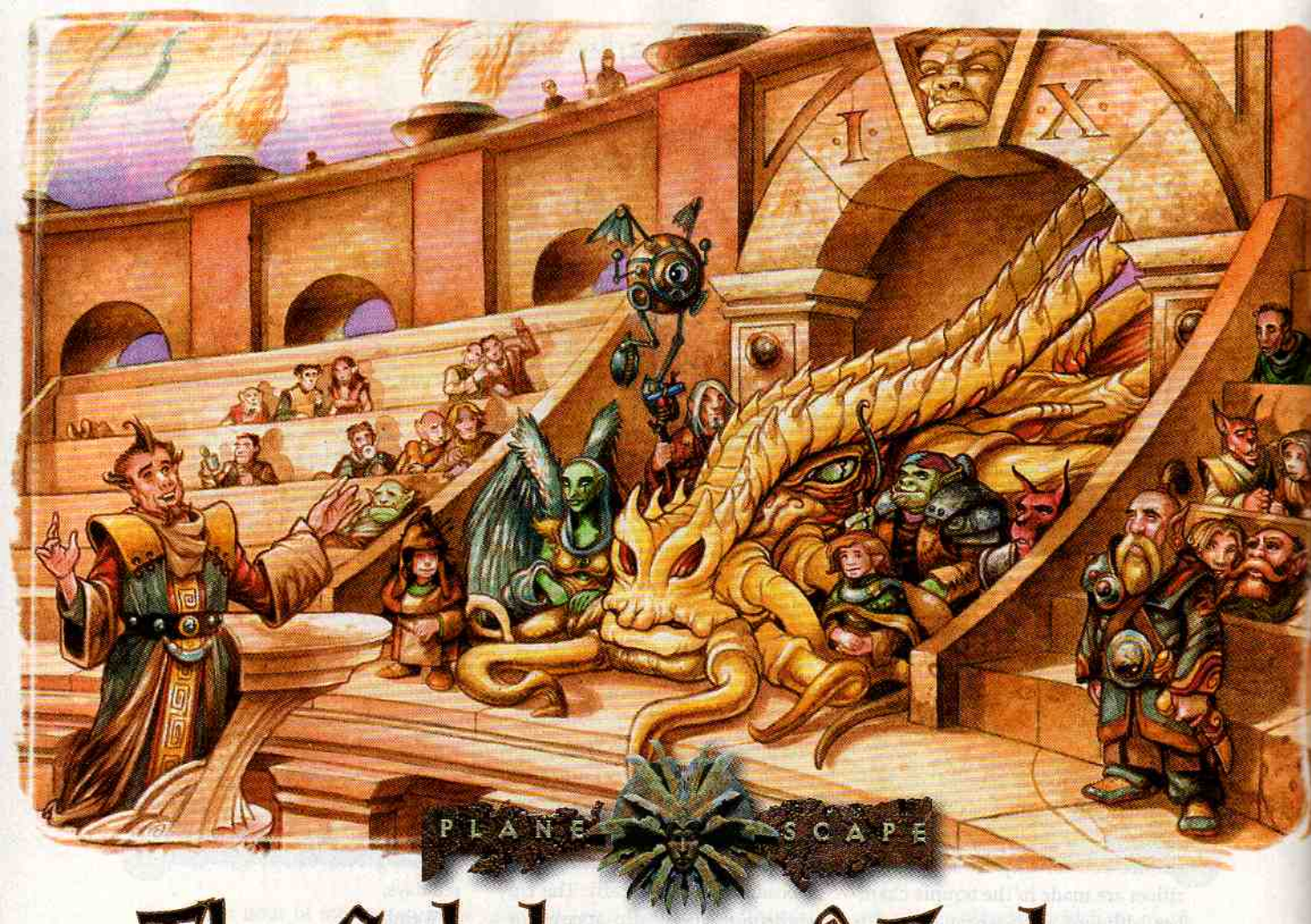
Price: 128,000 gp.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

The world of KARA-TUR is rife with the possibility for adventure. Although the people of Cham Fau are wary of outsiders, they quickly come to respect those who prove themselves honorable and peaceful.

A Fiend in Ming's Clothing: The people of Cham Fau have been suffering as of late under the strange edicts and taxes of Magistrate Ming. Ye Fan is perhaps the most perplexed in the recent changes and begins to suspect that the ruler is under some sort of influence or control. Learning that it is some threat from the World Serpent Inn, the abbot sends a student to look for help in the planar tavern.

Monk Search Group: The World Serpent Inn is overrun by monks from the White Tiger Monestary, searching for their legendary sword, the *chrysanthemum blade*. The sword was stolen two weeks ago by a powerful ogre mage who fled into the inn.



The Gatetown of Ecstasy

by Todd Stewart • illustrated by Jeff Laubenstein • cartography by Robert Lazaretti

Roughly 1,000 miles from the base of the Spire, a ring of communities known as gate-towns circle the Outlands. Each gate-town corresponds to one of the Outer Planes touched by the Outlands and exists due to its proximity to a permanent two-way portal to that plane. Heavily influenced by the realm beyond the portal, each gate-town holds similar attitudes to its neighboring plane, yet still possesses differences enough to prevent the community from becoming part of the plane beyond.

Along the ring of gate-towns, between Tradegate and Faunel, at the metaphysical fringe between the Outlands and Elysium, stands the gate-town of Ecstasy. Flooded with ambient benevolence, its citizens exalt the ideals of happiness and personal growth. Drawn to Ecstasy for unknowable reasons, the World Serpent Inn appears as a small cottage on the western edge of the city, a location with easy access to the gate-town's major attractions. Outside of the fact that its sudden appearance subtly rearranges the local landscape, only an iron ouroboros doorknocker marks the building as anything out of the ordinary. Despite this unobtrusiveness, reactions in Ecstasy are decidedly mixed. Some see the inn as an opportunity to introduce more people to the city's qualities of introspection and self-improvement, while others remain wary, seeing it as a potential source of danger. Regardless, those who venture forth from the World Serpent Inn often discover greater enlightenment and new inner secrets wandering the streets of Ecstasy.

ON THE PLANES

While *Manual of the Planes* and the *Planar Handbook* present a wealth of information on planar travel, those looking for more details on the PLANESCAPE campaign setting can find it in DRAGON #315 in the article "Exiled Factions," or in #339 with the article "Dead Factions." The fan websites **planewalker.com** and **mimir.net** also host incredible collections of info for PLANESCAPE campaigns or any extraplanar adventure.

ECSTASY

Ecstasy (large town): Nonstandard; AL NG; 3,000 gp limit; Assets 375,000 gp; Population 2,500; Integrated (30% human, 30% petitioner, 20% planetouched, 10% halfling, 3% bariaur, 3% guardinal, 1% rilmani, 3% other).

Authority Figures: Regialia Tonn the Sunmaster (NG female human fighter 16); Karo Janter the Dark Hunter (N male aasimar ranger 7/cipher adept 8); Felthis ap Jerran the Philosopher King (NG ultroloth).

Important Characters: Madame Millanni (LN female medusa), proprietor of the Revelhome; Morningwind (NG female avoral sorcerer 7/exalted arcanist 3 [*Book of Exalted Deeds*]) daughter of Duke Windheir of Elysium and ambassador of Release-From-Care; Joseph Arisek (N male aasimar cleric 15) high priest of the shrine of the Cadence; Bartol the Dawnsinger (NG male human cleric 14) high priest of the temple of Lathander.

A Trip into Ecstasy

A place of rural simplicity, whimsy, and self-improvement, Ecstasy attracts those to whom simple peace and days of personal contemplation appeal. While every gate-town reflects and interacts with its linked plane differently, Ecstasy shares Elysium's benevolent tenor. As days in the Outlands are split into a cycle of day and night, so too does the protection of Ecstasy split along the same lines. The bright hours of daylight fall under the auspices of a mortal known as the Sun Master, while the dark hours of night are ruled over by her counterpart, the Dark Hunter. They protect the city, and while Ecstasy has few organized laws beyond "do no evil," they dispense justice when evil does occur.

Visitors to the gate-town of Ecstasy are sure to notice and likely visit a number of unique locales.

The Plinths

Ecstasy is oftentimes called the "City of Plinths," and for good reason. Scattered across the idyllic landscape and throughout the town itself, stand hundreds of stone and iron monoliths, in some places as ubiquitous as trees in a forest. Some of the plinths appear to be natural standing stones, others possess intricate and beautiful carvings, and still more seem cast from a curiously speckled iron. Unusual works of art in their own right, their distribution seems as random as their appearances. Petitioners—the spirits of the dead residing in Ecstasy—frequently perch atop the stones in silent contemplation, looking inward as much as outward, seeking illumination and enlightenment. These meditative souls often encourage others to join in their ponderings. What benefit the plinths provide, or who constructed them in the first place, remains—as much in Ecstasy—a highly debated mystery.

The Bone Plinth

Rising from the very center of Ecstasy stands a high plinth of polished ivory that serves a vital purpose. Everything surrounding the plinth seems brighter more vibrant, and a sense of overwhelming tranquility floods the senses of each and every passerby, mortal and petitioner alike. Atop the Bone Plinth sits a great pool of quicksilver, the source of the benevolent aura and Ecstasy's portal to Elysium. Stepping into the pool, planewalkers emerge onto the banks of the River Oceanus on the layer of Amoria, only a few hours walk from the sapphire spires of the guardinal city of Release-From-Care.

Solrise Tower

Standing within view of the Bone Plinth, the amber mosaics of the Solrise Tower glisten in the daylight. Within its golden walls, the Sun Master resides and holds court, arbitrating disputes and keeping watch over the city. The current Sun Master—always recognizable for her golden robes, glowing mask, and the trio of solars who accompany her—is a woman named Regialia Tonn (NG female human fighter 15), originally from Oerth. Her angelic companions serve in payment for a favor she provided years ago to one of the powers of Elysium.

Moondark Tower

Once the sunlight recedes into twilight, the Sun Master returns to her tower and bars the gates, as the doors of another tower swing wide to greet the darkness. The Moondark Tower glitters like an earthbound constellation, as swirling patterns of light emanate from silvery minerals within its stones.

Inside, Karo Janter, the Dark Hunter (N male aasimar ranger 7/cipher adept 8 [*Planar Handbook*]), holds court, hearing the petitions of Ecstasy's populace in the hours of darkness and protecting them until daylight comes again. Clad in silver and black armor with a helmet of mirrored steel that glows like a full moon, he patrols the gate-town on horseback, always accompanied by a pack of moondogs. Karo also ranks high within the Transcendent Order, a group that believes in relying on instinct over excessive thought (see page 58 of the *Planar Handbook*), and during his tenure as Dark Hunter the influence of the faction has grown in Ecstasy, with only Elysium and Sigil serving as larger centers of the order's influence.

The Philosopher's Court

Near the center of Ecstasy stands a wide marble amphitheater covered in weathered guardinal and rilmani symbols where philosophers, priests, and petitioners gather to argue and debate. Some of them, clerics and faction members, try to gain converts to their ideologies, while others, mostly petitioners, seek to draw Ecstasy's populace into harmony with Elsyium, an act that could eventually cause the gate-town to physically merge with that plane.

RUMORS OF ECSTASY

In a town where speech and debate is as prevalent as it is in Ecstasy, rumors and half-recited news creates a constantly grinding rumor mill. Here are but a few bits of gossip currently making the rounds:

- *A serial killer preys upon travelers on the road toward Faunel. His more recent victims were a pair of modrons found brutally beaten.*

[False: A flock of simpathetics, Lower Planar avians, have taken up residence outside the gate-town. The evil birds' alignment drain led the dead modrons to fatally attack each other.]

- *Khaasta raiders have been sighted in the area, picking off poorly defended caravans and preying on villages between Ecstasy and Tradegate.*

[True: Common elsewhere across the Outlands, khaasta (*Fiend Folio*) are usually a rarity near Ecstasy. Groups of these raiders are becoming more frequent and more flagrant, possibly bribed by merchants of the planar trade consortium to attack rival merchants within the Free League.]

- *The Sun Master and Dark Hunter are plotting a coup to unseat the Philosopher King.*

[Exaggeration: Although the Sun Master and Dark Hunter respect his predecessor's decision, they harbor some unease regarding the new Philosopher King. Having pierced the ultroloth's disguises, the Sun Master worries that the seemingly well-intentioned fiend might bring all manner of danger to Ecstasy.]

Oftentimes, the ideas and positions put forward stand in violent opposition to one another, yet within the bounds of the court, regardless of the intensity of the arguments, violence is rare.

Under the moderation of the Philosopher King, debates must be fought with ideas and won through reason rather than force, as some unknown power of his prevents any form of violence from causing harm. He keeps debate constant and reasoned and prevents any one belief from drawing the city away from Elysium's gate or pushing it through entirely—possibilities that always exist as well-intentioned but lurking dangers.

Something of an enigma, Felthis ap Jerran, the Philosopher King (NG ultroloth), cloaks his true, fiendish nature in secrecy and magical disguises. Having only recently replaced his predecessor, an aged mortal wizard named Kagorius, speculation runs high as to his past as well as his plans for the gate-town. Dressing in elegant white robes, the Philosopher King appears differently to different people. To many, he is an ashen-skinned cervidal with graying hair and an aura of calm penitence, while others see a bald, dusky skinned aasimar with a voice that seems to resonate in their minds. What all agree upon, though, are his eyes: large and luminous orbs that constantly shift color and are the only hints of his fiendish heritage. Despite his Lower-Planar nature, Felthis is wholly

devoted to his role as Philosopher King and guarding Ecstasy's stability on the edge of two planes.

The Revelhome

Spireward from the Bone Plinth stands the gate-town's most frequently patronized destination, the tavern known as the Revelhome. This famed festhall prospers under the hand of its habitually veiled and hooded proprietor, a member of the Society of Sensation named Madame Millanni (LN female medusa). Mortals most commonly patronize the hall, sharing tales and doing business, but such is the richness of the experience that many petitioners partake of its delights as well. With food and wine rich and exotic beyond belief, emotions run strong and deep at the Revelhome, but the carousing never slips to hedonism or debauchery—the veiled madam's garden of statues assures of that.

Gate to Sigil

A freestanding granite archway activated by holding forth a flower's blossom and smiling, Ecstasy's gate to Sigil stands at a crossroads spireward from the Revelhome. An invaluable source of trade and route of transit for the gate-town's merchants and mortal populace, the gate is also something of a headache and the source of most of Ecstasy's more prosaic troubles.

Simpathetic

About the size of a crow, this brown and gold-feathered bird looks at you inquisitively, its eyes seemingly clouded over with blood.

Looking like large crows with mottled brown and gold feathers and sullen mustard-colored legs and beak, these birds are distinctive for the crimson splashes at their tail and wingtips and their blood-red eyes. Simpathetics either evolved on one of the Lower Planes or were mortal birds altered by some fiendish sorcerer, but regardless of their origin they hungrily expand their nesting grounds, eager to feed on the joy, mercy, and benevolence of their charmed victims, leaving only greed and malice in their wake.

SIMPATHETIC **CR 3**

NE Tiny magical beast (extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4

Language Abyssal, Common, Infernal

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13

hp 5 (1 HD)

Immune fire

SR 15

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Spd 10 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee claw +6 (1d2–4)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Base Atk +1; Grp –11

Atk Options alignment drain, blood spit

Special Actions plane travel, speak with avians

Spell-like Abilities (CL 7th)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 17)

Abilities Str 2, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16

Feats Weapon Finesse (claw)

Skills Bluff +6, Hide +15, Knowledge (the planes) +5, Listen +4, Spot +4

Alignment Drain (Su) A simpathetic that perches upon or otherwise stays in contact with a living creature for a full round feeds on its innate goodness (if any). For every round a simpathetic remains in contact with a creature, that creature must make a DC 13 Will save or have its alignment shifted one step toward chaotic evil (if it isn't that alignment already). A creature must be willing, unconscious, charmed, or otherwise immobilized to allow a simpathetic to perch on it. A simpathetic can do nothing else during a round that it drains alignment. A creature affected by this ability functions as if its alignment is naturally this new alignment, losing access to any alignment-dependent class abilities (like a paladin's spells and abilities). A drained creature's alignment gradually recovers, returning to normal at a rate of one step per week, while *atonement* or *remove curse* immediately restores a creature's natural alignment. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Blood Spit (Ex) Once per day, a simpathetic can make a ranged touch attack that deals 1d4 points of acid damage. Those struck must make a DC 10 Fortitude save or, in addition to the damage, be blinded for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Plane Travel (Su) Through a complicated weeklong aerial dance, a flock of six or more simpathetics can transport half of their number to a randomly determined plane as per the spell *plane shift*.

Speak with Avians (Ex) Simpathetics can naturally communicate with any avian creature.

Ravenloft

The Shadows of Sithicus

by James Lowder • illustrated by John Gravato • cartography by Robert Lazzaretti

In the misty, forgotten reaches of the Multiverse lies a sinister, composite world known by many names: the Realms of Terror, the Demiplane of Dread, Ravenloft. While entering this dread realm is relatively easy, exiting is an altogether different matter, and the unfortunate souls who find themselves within its clutches soon learn that escape is all but impossible. The few travelers who have recently braved the Land of Mists have found themselves trapped within the domain of Sithicus, a dismal realm thrown into turmoil by the departure of its tyrannical ruler, Lord Soth.

The Inn in the Mists

As with countless other worlds, the World Serpent Inn reaches into the Dark Domains. Each night, at sundown in Ravenloft, a portal in the inn's ever-changing back halls fills with mists and manifests in a different location within the demiplane. The portal remains connected to that spot throughout the night, but vanishes with the sunrise the next morning (see the Random Domains sidebar). As a passage to countless other worlds, the World Serpent Inn is one of the few ways to escape the demiplane and as such, rumors of a mysterious, realm-shifting inn have inspired many foolhardy searches among the realm's populace. Anyone who does manage to find the inn can enter, with the exception of darklords, the prisoners of Ravenloft's domains, who are barred by some mysterious power.

While offering hope to the people of Ravenloft, the inn's connection to the Dread Realm poses a fearful threat to planar travelers. Patrons who enter Ravenloft, whether accidentally or out of morbid curiosity, immediately draw the attention of the Dark Powers, forces which might try to coax the

interlopers away from the inn's entrance. If a traveler fails to pass back through the inn's door before it vanishes with the morning, he finds himself trapped within the Demiplane of Dread.

Sithicus

The domain of Sithicus formed around the infamous death knight Lord Soth in the year 720, according to the Barovian calendar. For thirty-two years, the Knight of the Black Rose ruled over the domain with cold indifference. While residing on the world of Krynn, the death knight had clung fiercely to his infamous history, but Sithicus was a place that threatened to rob Soth of his memories. He left much of the domain's day-to-day rule to his seneschal—the murderous dwarven werebadger Azrael Dak—and lost himself in magical reverie through the use of *memory mirrors*, magical creations that contained fragments of Soth's past.

In 752, plots by Azrael Dak and a young Vistani woman named Inza Magdova Kulchevich intertwined with supernatural events, leading to Lord Soth's departure from Ravenloft. (Scholars still debate whether the death knight escaped or was expelled after being broken by the Dark Powers.) Azrael declared himself king and took control of the fractured Sithican government. Inza, however, merged with the shadows of Sithicus's dreaded Great Chasm, becoming the domain's darklord and the true power within the realm.

The domain itself swiftly changed to reflect the new darklord. As Soth's prison, Sithicus perverted history and twisted memories. Inza's Sithicus, however, is a place where people can't forget their misdeeds. Sithicans dwell upon their sins and flaws, no matter how minor, and in doing so come to expect everyone to share their failings and imperfections. Paranoia and paralyzing distrust are the hallmarks of the current Sithican psyche. Even visitors to the domain are afflicted by the "Guilt of Sithicus."

For Inza, her subjects' unease provides a welcome distraction from the truth that plagues her: nobility and innocence can and do exist, even within the Dark Domains. During her life, Inza betrayed everyone around her and justified her actions with her assumption that all others were just as grasping, just as corrupt, as she knew herself to be. As darklord, she has come to realize the truth—and that knowledge torments her.

To dim that pain, Inza seeks to subvert or destroy all nobility within Sithicus. She directs the weak-minded in her domain to snuff out whatever sparks of good burn in their neighbors' souls. A favorite tactic in recent months has been tricking noble Sithicans into falling afoul of King Azrael's secret police, the Politskarae. These unlucky souls quickly find themselves imprisoned in the squalid internment camp known as Sorrow. The camp houses more than one hundred good and honorable Sithicans considered subversives or potential threats to Azrael's despotic government.

The Domain of Sithicus

A place of thick, tangled woods and sharp, rugged mountains, Sithicus is a withdrawn realm with little interest in the outside world.

The domain's three largest settlements, Har-Thelen, Hroth, and Mal-Erek, are predominatly populated by elves who prove hostile to strangers—especially those of less than pure elven descent. In recent years, resistance against the rule of the brutish King Azrael has grown among the elves, with the village of Mal-Erek as the center of the unrest. The king's soldiers still maintain order within the elven cities, but more and more often suffer from hit-and-run attacks by rebels. Only infighting between the three main elven enclaves has prevented them from organizing a wider revolt.

Random Domains

The following table provides DMs with a tool to decide in which of Ravenloft's domains characters who exit the World Serpent Inn appear, as well as determining where the inn appears next.

d%	Domain
1–3	Lamordia
4–6	Dementlieu
7–9	Falkovia
10–12	Keening
13–15	Tepest
16–18	Mordent
19–21	Necropolis
22–24	Valachan
25–27	Richemulot
28–30	Sithicus
31–33	Invidia
34–36	Borca
37–39	Barovia
40–42	Darkon
43–45	Kartakass
46–48	Forlorn
49–51	Hazlan
52–54	Nova Vaasa
55–57	Markovia
58–60	The Shadow Rift
61–63	Vechor
64–66	Verbrek
67–69	Bluetspur
70–72	G'Henna
73–75	Odiare
76–78	Souragne
79–81	The Nocturnal Sea
82–84	The Sea of Sorrows
85–87	The Amber Wastes
88–90	The Frozen Reaches
91–93	The Verdurous Lands
94–96	The Burning Peaks
97	The House of Lament
98	The Nightmare Lands
99	The Mists
00	DM's choice

Lost in the Mists

Dare to learn more of Ravenloft's secrets? The adventure *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft* revisits the module that first entered the mists, while Dragon #315, #339, and #348 present familiar locations, monsters, and spells from the Demiplane of Dread.

Those who find themselves in Sithicus might seek to explore some of the following locations.

The Giant's Cloak: The woods known as the Giant's Cloak received their name from the stone giant and his allies who utilized the thickly wooded area as a hiding place from both Inza's minions and King Azrael's soldiers. The woods are full of all manner of nonlethal traps.

The Great Chasm: The Great Chasm gapes in the heart of Sithicus like an open, festering wound. The chasm runs for dozens of miles north to south, and is up to as many as five miles across as its widest point. Sections are said to be bottomless, although few explorers have been foolish enough to test those claims. Fearsome creatures lurk within the rift, creeping forth when the sun sets. Inza Kulchevich also makes her lair somewhere within the Great Chasm, and from there she plots the destruction of the noble and the corruption of all innocence within her domain.

Iron Warden: Although little more than a trading post, Iron Warden is a frequent stop for merchants traveling through the domain and explorers planning to investigate the Great Chasm.

Har-Thelen: While merely a village of five hundred souls, Har-Thelen is largely accepted as the capital of Sithicus. Trade along the Musarde River and Merchant's Slash make the community the most tolerant of outsiders, but nonelves are still shunned and mistrusted.

Hroth: The largest community in Sithicus and home to nearly a thousand residents, Hroth lies on the edge of a boggy land where terrible things are rumored to crawl and slither.

Kendralind: This hidden town lies deep within the tangled Fumewood. The residents are halflinglike creatures from the world of Krynn called kender. In their homeworld, kender are fun-loving wanders, but their time in Sithicus has left this group violent, bitter, and, in many cases, afflicted with vampirism.

Mal-Erek: Nearly five hundred elves reside in this xenophobic community. The Library of Mal-Erek here is a place of rotted, forgotten lore and ruined secrets.

Ruins of Nedragaard Keep: On the night Lord Soth departed Sithicus his castle was destroyed. The ruins of Nedragaard Keep now stand upon a spire within the Great Chasm. The stone bridge that once spanned the rift is gone, so reaching the ruins is all but impossible. The ruins are the home of the Blessed Knight (see sidebar). When he wishes to leave the ruins a ghostly bridge forms across the Great Chasm.

Sorrow: Azrael has avoided establishing a capital, instead moving

The Blessed Knight, Lord Soth

This noble figure is a supernatural double of the domain's former darklord, the knight Lord Soth—a warrior who was once given the chance to prevent the Kingpriest of Istar from causing the Cataclysm on Krynn and was cursed to live forever as a death knight when he failed (see page 36 of this issue). Rumors in Sithicus call this version of Soth the Blessed Knight, as he now wanders the domain doing good works and protecting innocents. This noble Soth was formed in the *memory mirrors* that once lined the death knight's throne room in Nedregaard Keep. When the cursed Soth left the domain and his castle was destroyed in the Hour of Screaming Shadows, the *memory mirrors* shattered and this noble image of Soth was set free. The presence of the Blessed Knight in Sithicus is like a dagger through Inza's black heart. He is, after all, a manifestation of the redemption that even a monster like Soth might have found, had he been willing to turn away from his sins and accept the possibility of mercy.

Memory Mirror (Lesser Artifact)

Once an indulgence of a dreaded villain, this 6-foot-wide by 3-foot-wide mirror was shattered into twelve fragments. While the bulk of the mirror's power resides in a single central piece held by the Blessed Knight, the other shards serve to empower the key piece and unlock its greater abilities. While broken, anyone who looks into the *memory mirror* sees a refection of her past innocence and an image of her idealized self. These sights render her immune to the Guilt of Sithicus and Inza's guilt lash for a number of weeks equal to 1 + the number of shards fused to the central piece. The *memory mirror* glows with a soft white radiance when within 100 yards of another piece and shards held together bond seamlessly.

If all twelve pieces of the *memory mirror* are found and combined, a character who looks within becomes permanently immune to the Guilt of Sithicus and Inza's guilt lash. In addition, if Inza sees herself in the *memory mirror* she is sickened for 1 hour, during which time she loses her shadow form and shadow healing abilities and, perhaps, might be slain permanently.

through the kingdom in a chariot constructed of the bones and teeth of his enemies, but the rapidly expanding internment camp called Sorrow has become the domain's de facto political center. The camp's name is derived from the sobriquet the elves gave to Azrael: the Sorrow of Sithicus. The camp's buildings are constructed of stone mined from the Misttop Mountains by the ever-growing prison population. Any breach of the king's law can land a citizen in Sorrow, while visitors to the domain are frequently pressed into service as camp guards. Visitors who refuse the honor of joining Azrael's army find themselves among the prisoners, unless they can pay handsomely for their freedom.

Veldrava: Deep salt mines bore into the Misttop Mountains here. Sinister whispers are said to murmur from within these pits' corrosive depths.

Yurt: This small village of four hundred stands within the neighboring domain of Kartakass. The people are far more welcoming than those in Sithicus.

The Guilt of Sithicus

Any sentient being who passes through the borders of Sithicus and enters this dismal realm is afflicted by a state called in whispers the "Guilt of Sithicus." This preternatural guilt manifests itself as a domain-wide curse on all sentient, mortal creatures, imposing a –1 penalty on all Will saves and Wisdom-based skill checks for as long as the creature remains in Sithicus. No spell or ability can counteract this penalty, but rumors report that the pieces of a broken relic tied to the previous darklord can loosen the guilt's effects.

Adventures in Sithicus

Getting characters to leave the comfortable confines of the World Serpent Inn for the bleak and unwelcoming domain of Sithicus might prove a challenge. Here are a few ideas for getting PCs to cross the threshold into Ravenloft:

Blessed Knight: The Blessed Knight enters the World Serpent Inn and offers the characters a shard of the *memory mirror* (see sidebar) that created him, entreating them for aid. If the PCs take up the quest, they must locate the eleven other glass shards scattered in the Hour of Screaming Shadows. Half can be found in the ruins of Nedragaard Keep, a quarter in the Great Chasm, and the rest strewn throughout Sithicus. It's unlikely, however, that the domain's darklord, Inza, will allow the PCs to craft her doom unimpeded.

Ghosts of Ravenloft: As the characters relax in the inn's common room, familiar figures enter from the back halls—long-lost loves or dear family members dead for years. They describe a monstrous, shadowy captor in the world outside the inn, a creature that has trapped their souls. The phantoms beg the PCs to help them. Should the characters enter Ravenloft, the phantoms disappear, possibly as a trick of Inza, the Dark Powers, or some other malign force.

Press Gang: King Azrael's soldiers enter the inn and target the weakest creatures there as new recruits for the king's army. Because more soldiers wait outside, they try to drag the unwilling beings from the inn and do their fighting where the odds are more in their favor. While the battle is likely to end quickly once the inn's other patrons become involved, those taken into Ravenloft might have difficulty escaping.

INZA DARKLORD OF SITHICUS

This beautiful yet stern-featured Vistana looks no more than twenty winters old. Slender and pale skinned, her brightly-colored skirts and kerchief are contrasted by tresses the color of a dead, starless night sky.

INZA MAGDOVA KULCHEVICH, DARKLORD OF SITHICUS CR 16*

Female human rogue 6/wizard 8
NE Medium humanoid (unique)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +9, Spot +10

Languages Balok, Patterna, Luktar, Sithican

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18; uncanny dodge

hp 57 (14 HD); shadow healing; **DR** 5/magic

Immune shadow immunity, *magic jar*, mind-affecting effects

Weakness daylight vulnerability, innocence vulnerability

Fort +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11; evasion

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +4 *dagger of wounding* +16/+11 (1d4+5 plus 1 point of Con damage plus poison/19–20)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9

Attack Options guilt lash, sneak attack +3d6

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds, potion of haste*, three doses of Large scorpion venom

Spells Prepared (CL 8th)

4th—*animate dead, shadow conjuration*

3rd—*gaseous form, major image* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 16), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*cat's grace, darkness, invisibility* (DC 15), *summon swarm*

1st—*disguise self, mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, ventriloquism* (DC 14)

0—*detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand, prestidigitation*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 18

SQ shadow affinity, shadow form, shadow healing, static burn, summon familiar (shadow asp)*, trapfinding, trap sense +2

Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +7, Balance +6, Bluff +13, Concentration +9, Craft (alchemy) +7, Craft (poison making) +9, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +8 (+18 to act in character), Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +10, Hide +15, Jump +6, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (local) +20, Listen +9, Move Silently +15, Search +8, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Spellcraft +16, Spot +10, Survival +7, Tumble +13

Possessions* combat gear plus +3 *leather armor of invulnerability*, Novgor (+4 *dagger of wounding*), *amulet of life protection* (renders Inza immune to *magic jar* and mind-affecting effects), *ring of protection +3, crystal ball* with *detect thoughts, potion of neutralize poison, potion of water breathing*

Spellbook as above plus: 0—all, 1st—*chill touch, feather fall, identify, Nystul's magic aura, ray of enfeeblement, reduce person, shield*; 2nd—*detect thoughts, fog cloud, locate object, Tasha's hideous laughter, touch of idiocy, web*; 3rd—*deep slumber, dispel magic, nondetection*; 4th—*greater invisibility, lesser geas*

Daylight Vulnerability (Ex) Inza takes 1d4 points of nonlethal damage every round she is exposed to direct sunlight. This damage is lethal if she is in shadow form while exposed.

Innocence Vulnerability (Ex) The mere presence of true innocence pains Inza. She takes a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, checks, and saves made either to attack an innocent character, or to resist the attacks of an innocent character. While what defines an "innocent" character is largely left to the DM to decide, a simple way to define an innocent character is as a creature of good alignment who has never killed another sentient creature.

Shadow Affinity (Ex) Creatures like shadows and natives of the Plane of Shadow have helpful attitudes regarding Inza.

Shadow Immunity (Ex) Inza takes no damage from spells of the shadow subschool.

Static Burn (Ex) Inza cannot rest in the same location two nights in a row. If she attempts it, she is wracked with terrible dreams and gains no benefit from the night's sleep (regaining no hit points and being unable to prepare spells).

Guilt Lash (Su) As a standard action, Inza can force any sentient creature in Sithicus to relive the moments of its life it feels guiltiest about. The target must make a DC 27 Will save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Shadow Form (Su) As a standard action, Inza can transform herself and all of her equipment into pure shadow. While in shadow form she is incorporeal, gains a +4 bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination (but takes a –4 penalty in areas of bright illumination), and moves with perfect silence.

Shadow Healing (Ex) Inza heals 2 points of damage each round so long as she has at least 1 hit point and is within an area of shadowy illumination or complete darkness. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, Inza automatically assumes shadow form and attempts to escape. She must reach an area of shadowy illumination or darkness within 1 hour or be destroyed. (She can travel up to 3 miles in 1 hour.) Once at rest in a darkened place, Inza is helpless. She regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 2 hit points per round. Even if Inza is destroyed, she reforms in a darkened cavern of the Great Chasm 1d4 weeks later.

*As a darklord of Ravenloft, Inza has a number of unique abilities beyond those of her race and equipment in excess of that normally available to one of her class level. These advantages are reflected in her CR. Inza is also accompanied by a shadow asp familiar, a creature that can be found in the *Fiend Folio*.

by Jacob Frazier • illustrated by Ben Wooten

The Ecology of the Isle of Dread

The Journal of Larissa Vanderboren

Today I leave the safety of the colony for the village of Tanaroa. We've been here for several months on the Isle of Temute, establishing the Farshore colony and attempting relations with the local Olman villages. While these proceedings are important for our family's—and, indeed, all of Sasserine's—designs on these far-flung shores, I find them rather tiresome. Thus, I've convinced my husband Verik, who leads the expedition, of the value in exploring and documenting the mainland of this, the Isle of Dread. While obviously concerned for my safety, he knows that my magic and experience as an adventurer will keep me from harm.

Within the Fangs of Zotzilaha

6th of Wealsun, 593 CY

I have returned from a journey with the Tanaroan natives to the volcano Nextepeua, one of the twin volcanoes known as the Fangs of Zotzilaha. The Tanaroans make annual pilgrimages to offer appeasements to their bat-god Camazotz. I had agreed to the trip to display our good intentions to our Olman neighbors, hoping to help Verik's goal of establishing mutual trade with them.

The Fangs are an imposing sight, rising up to dizzying heights and dwarfing the scenery around them. From their heights billow pillars of black, acrid smoke visible for many miles, polluting the air with ash and debris. Muffled rumbles growl from deep beneath the peaks, suggesting the incredible activity of the world's bowels. The fields surrounding the Fangs steam with slag and knee-deep ash, while the grounds closer to the peaks are riddled with lava tubes. Some evidence of flowing magma colliding with underground water exists, as poisonous gas belches from deep vents and fissures. It's no wonder the natives fear this place—they live under constant threat of an explosive eruption.

The Tanaroans explained that we must wait until nightfall, when the volcanoes' sacred baboon guardians retreat to their caves. The baboons—omnivorous and dangerously ravenous—live out a pitiful existence, surviving off sparse vegetation and huddling together around the few pools of stagnant rainwater.

When twilight fell, hordes of great bats swept out from the lava tubes and fissures, blacking out the smoke-clouded sky. I was startled by the creatures' physical size, some with wingspans up to 15 feet. In spite of their mass, they exhibited surprising maneuverability, both in the air and on the ground. The sight of so many of them, a colony several thousand strong, instilled a primal fear within me. Although they drove the baboons hooting back to their caves, the bats

SAVAGE TIDE

Larissa Vanderboren's journal appears in the Vanderboren vault in the first adventure of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, "There is No Honor," from *Dungeon* #139. This work contains her research notes on the Isle of Dread's ecosystem, along with maps and sketches of the creatures of the island. Presented here are selected entries and sketches from that research, translated from Sylvan. The player's map of the Isle of Dread, included with this issue, can also be employed as part of Larissa's observations.

ignored us completely, enabling us to approach unchallenged—an event that, to the Tanaroans, was a sign Camazotz himself had granted safe passage.

Once inside Nextepeua, the shaman leading the pilgrimage began repeating a tribal, rhythmic chant. Whatever incantation he worked upon us proved sufficient, for we withstood the heat emanating from the walls and the occasional blasts of scorching air. The searing volcanic fumes made breathing difficult, even with the cloth masks we used, and the muffled rumbles heard outside were deafening this close to the volcanic core. The smoke and heat waves also made navigation nearly impossible. I would have surely been lost within those hellish depths forever had not the Tanaroans been so familiar with the way, seemingly capable of making the trek without the need for sight.

After what seemed an eternity, we arrived at the Shrine of Camazotz. We hurriedly placed our offerings at a soot-covered carving of a bat in the far wall. Within the shrine I placed a memento my daughter Lavinia had made for me when she was a child, offering something near to my heart as the Tanaroans suggested. I am hopeful that through my obeisance I have earned at least a marginal respect from the Olman natives.

Ecology of the Phanaton

24th of Wealsun, 593 CY

While wandering the central jungle, stubbornly classifying the island's endless varieties of flora, I caught sight of a strange, diminutive primate. Carrying a spear, it had a satchel slung across its shoulders and appeared to be rummaging for mushrooms on the spongy ground. It hadn't noticed me so I approached for a closer look.

Little more than 2 feet tall, the creature looked like a raccoon, with dark fur around its eyes and ringed stripes on its tail. It also had primate-distinguishing features, such as opposable thumbs and a prehensile tail, but displayed a thin membrane of skin stretched between its front and back legs (later I would observe its use for gliding between trees).

Its eyes suddenly met mine, and for a brief moment, I thought the creature looked inquisitive, but then it started shrieking in a shrill, warbling cry. Almost instantly, more of the creatures came rushing through the bushes and dropping from the trees—too many to count. Before I could act, a primitive net made from vines ensnared me, and the creatures began pummeling me with their clubs and the butt-ends of their spears until I lost consciousness.

I awoke with my hands tied behind my back, lying on a wooden platform supported by the boughs of an ancient deklo tree. I could sense that I was high up in the jungle canopy, and I noticed my provisions and research notes dumped out next to me. As I looked around, I could see more platforms in the surrounding trees, connected by treacherous-looking bridges made of knotted vines and strewn with simple wooden huts. These creatures had built an entire village among the trees. Scores of the small creatures watched from nearby platforms, through tiny hut windows, and from the foliage of branches above, spying on me curiously as I came to my senses.

As I composed myself, one of the tiny creatures, their leader by the look of his unique, brightly feathered adornments, approached me and untied my hands. He shocked me by speaking a crude sort of Sylvan—distinguishable phrases interspersed with soft hoots and odd clicks of the tongue. He apologized for the inconvenience and explained that I had surprised a group of his people while they gathered medicinal herbs from the forest floor below. He had looked through my journal, discovered my druidic beliefs, and was very apologetic for the misunderstanding. He invited me to a village feast and the following grooming session that evening as a token of their good will.

I stayed with the creatures—who I came to know as phanatons—for three days thereafter, learning of their society and culture. When I left, the one that I had spied on the jungle floor, named Hatoi, offered to join me as a guide—a sort of peace offering from these creatures. At first, Hatoi was shy, but with

time I began to connect with him by letting him look at my journal. He is fond of my sketches, particularly of the island's plant life, and he will no doubt prove invaluable in classifying the jungle flora.

The Effects of Loco Weed

7th of Richfest, 593 CY

For the past several days, I've been observing a herd of ankylosaurs that graze near an inland lake in the northwestern reaches of the isle. Within this group, one male in particular has been exhibiting very curious behavior, of hostile and unsocial bearing. I've come to blame this comportment on his consumption of a toxic weed that grows in patches along the lake's eastern banks.

Several minutes after eating the weed, the ankylosaur begins taking short, shallow breaths, and seems a bit unsteady on his feet. Once the drug fully takes hold, he exhibits an increased blood flow—evidenced by his overall pinkish hue—and begins to drool. Other effects of the plant are rapid eye movement, loss of balance, occasional vomiting, and highly aggressive behavior.

The amount of weed consumed has a proportional effect on the ankylosaur's belligerence. On a normal day, he eats only a small quantity—enough to become easily agitated. The rest of the herd has learned to avoid him during these episodes, as he swings his tail at anything that approaches. Even when docile and not under the influence of the plant, the herd and other local herbivores give him plenty of space, not wishing to incur his wrath. A bruised shin is apparently enough to make even the largest diplodocus wary of him.

Larger meals of the plant have a more powerful effect on the giant reptile, causing him to become extremely aggressive and attack anything he sees. His depth perception seems altered during these episodes, as yesterday I observed him charging into the jungle only to run headlong into a tree trunk. He became so enraged that he smashed down nearly thirty trees before disappearing into the jungle.

After about two hours, the drug begins to wear off. The specimen exhibits loss of hunger, lethargy, and impotent irritability; usually collapsing wherever he finds himself after the plant's effects have run their course. Once he is fast asleep, the herd resumes its daily grazing.

The ankylosaur shows signs of physical addiction to the plant, refusing to let any members of his herd near a patch. When he can't find sources of the weed, he goes through stages of extreme depression, although social rejection might account for this behavior, as he is an outcast among the group.

When I asked the Panitube natives about the weed, they smiled and laughed to themselves as if privy to some private joke, which I take to mean that they are indeed familiar with it. I overheard one of them call it "cualoco zacatl," which roughly translates from Olman to "angry grass." The few natives who speak the trade tongue, however, have made a broken translation, calling it "loco weed."

Territorial Behavior of Terror Birds

10th of Reaping, 593 CY

Concerning the flock of terror birds that I have been studying near the isle's eastern peninsula, today I witnessed a pack of males force a dimetrodon away from its kill. The creature had wandered into the high grasses of the flock's territory and brought down a giant scorpion, an easy catch with little signs of struggle. This was soon to change, though, for the terror bird scavengers can be very persistent when it comes to robbing meals.

The tall birds slowly encircled the predator, assessing the situation. At first, the dimetrodon seemed indifferent to their presence, continuing to eat while only occasionally snapping at birds that got too close. As the flightless avians gained confidence, they began flaunting—rising up to their full

height and fluffing their head plumes. They strutted back and forth, low resonating grunts emanating from deep within their chests. When their displays failed to intimidate the feeding predator, some of them began turning their hindquarters toward it and kicking dirt into its face. This immediately garnered the reptile's full attention.

Unwilling to give up its kill, the dimetrodon flushed the sail on its back, bared its teeth, and began bellowing at its attackers. This show of force came too late, though, as the birds had worked themselves into a frenzy. The flanking terror birds nipped at its tail, hitting and running, much to their target's frustration. While doing little harm, it made the dimetrodon spin around to snap at them. Taking advantage of this momentary distraction, the other birds rushed in for quick strikes, butting and quickly biting with their powerful beaks. At one point, the dimetrodon actually staggered to keep its balance. Finally having had enough, the giant lizard abandoned its meal and fled at a waddling gait. The birds gave pursuit, screeching as they drove the creature from their territory. Once the threat of the predator was gone, they dragged the half-eaten scorpion back to the waiting chicks and females of their flock.

In other parts of the Flanaess, these flightless birds are top predators of their habitats, but here they are clearly bottom-feeding scavengers. If it were not for their strength of numbers, they would certainly be ill equipped at defending their nests and might have long ago disappeared from the island. They have adapted quite well to their situation and exhibit a remarkable ability to drive off most predators that threaten their nesting grounds.

Tyrannosaurus Rex!

22nd of Reaping, 593 CY

In gathering data for my documentation of the island's food chains, Hatoi and I witnessed a tyrannosaur consume a lesser theropod in the northeastern grasslands. The prey was too small to sate the giant beast's hunger, and once it caught our scent and spotted us, it charged—frighteningly fast for a creature of such size. Terrified, and against all instinct, I held my ground, knowing that fleeing would certainly be my last act.

I attempted to speak to it to try to calm the massive beast, but it ignored me, slowing its advance only slightly. My heart pounding, I redoubled my efforts and the rex came to a reluctant halt. I have heard tales of druids who consort with these beasts, but that seemed a dangerous proposition. Verik would surely scold me if he knew I had even attempted it.

The titan lowered its head to sniff me with one great nostril, its scimitar-sized teeth scant inches away. Fascinated, I reached out a trembling hand to touch it, and just then, Hatoi jumped from his tree and landed squarely on the top of the tyrant's skull. I yelled at him to stop, but it was too late. The tyrannosaur raised its mighty head and let out a deafening roar. It began thrashing and spinning its body to shake off the small nuisance, snapping its great jaws in anticipation of the morsel. As Hatoi raised his spear, I cried out to prevent what was to occur, but too late. He plunged his spear deep into one of the tyrannosaur's eyes, blinding the giant and sending it into an uncontrollable rage. Between roars, it swung its tail wildly while clawing impotently at its face, unable to remove the tiny spear.

The last I saw of the rex, it was bullying its way into the jungle to the west, splintering the innocent trees as it ran. The sound of its flight turned to sounds of intense struggle, the trees began shaking violently and a shocked reptilian roar reverberated through the jungle. Reappearing from the undergrowth, Hatoi began frantically waving his hands as if warding off some perceived evil. When the tyrannosaur abruptly became quiet, choked off in mid-roar, and the tops of the trees stopped moving, wide-eyed Hatoi started making loud, agitated ticking sounds. He wanted very desperately to leave the area, pulling my hand to lead me away from the mysterious and disturbing sounds.

Not questioning my native guide's obvious urgency, we quickly journeyed back to the village. Later, when I asked, Hatoi refused to speak of his actions, becoming frightened and emotional. For the first time, I've come to realize the phanaton is keeping certain truths pertaining to the isle a secret from me.

Ecology of the Masher

5th of Goodmonth, 593 CY

My interactions with the natives are beginning to bear fruit, as they have begun trading with Farshore, eager to exchange pearls harvested from oysters that live around the coral reefs of the island. Following rumors of

All creatures fear the isle's terrible thunder lizards

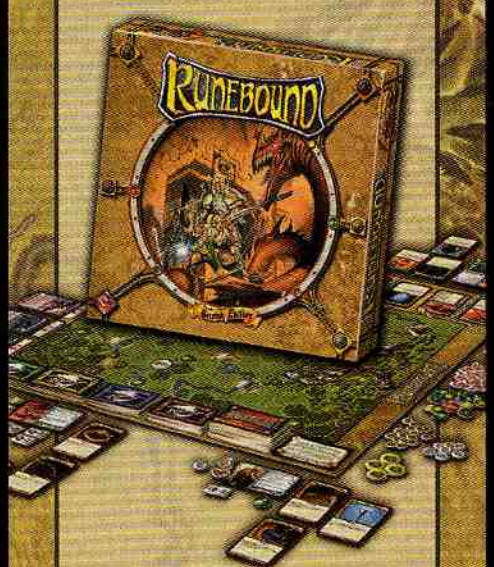
huge pearls, we've bartered two canoes with the fishermen of Burowao, the easternmost peninsula village, in exchange for guides to lead a Far-shore expedition to a reef where they claim giant oysters make their homes. I went along with the explorers to investigate the reports of such giant mollusks and learn more about the isle's aquatic inhabitants.

We anchored at a reef off the north-eastern shores of the island. Our guides spoke of monstrous, territorial eels that feed on the coral there—a trait that has since earned them the name "mashers." With the help of the fishermen, we devised a strategy for stealing the pearls from their homes.

Approaching the reef in outriggers, we maneuvered into the shallow water over the reef—less than 2 feet deep—and disembarked. Walking on the reef proved difficult—if you weren't careful, you could easily break an ankle. Our mission was to attract the attention of the mashers by dislodging chunks of the reef with long poles, hoping to provoke a feeding frenzy, giving our divers the necessary distraction to gather the pearl-bearing oysters.

Within moments of breaking off the first coral chunks the mashers responded. Several sets of the eels' wicked black spines broke from the water, serpentine in their movements as they approached. Some looked

A land of infinite adventure awaits you!



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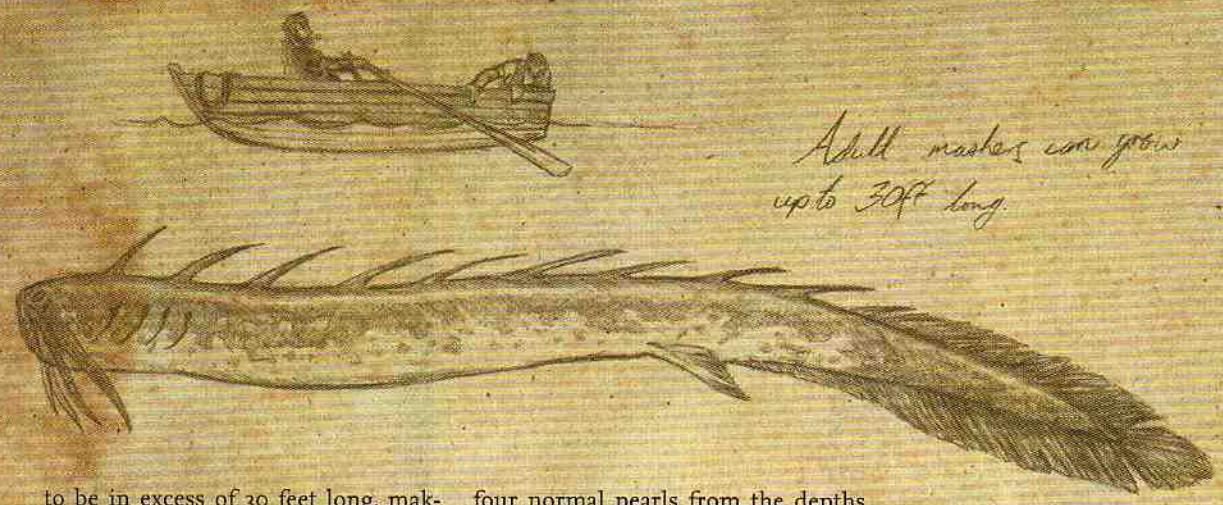

to be in excess of 30 feet long, making them more than a match for the aquatic reptiles lurking in these foggy waters. As the monstrous eels gained speed, I realized their intentions and began yelling for my comrades to retreat. The mashers' skulls bear thick growths of bone, with which they began relentlessly ramming the reef, sending jarring shockwaves through it, knocking us from our feet. A great schism opened in the coral we stood on, and the solid surface beneath us was suddenly gone, sunk into the lower underwater mazes, leaving us treading water that was now deep enough for the mashers to navigate. Two of our men who chose to swim to the canoe are no longer with us. One moment they were there and the next they were simply gone, nothing marking their presence other than a cloud of turbulent bubbles of blood.

As we emerged onto the standing reef, I noticed one of the native's arms hanging limp at his side, quickly turning black—he had brushed against one of the poisonous spines on the mashers' backs. Cursing myself for lacking the vital spell, I tried to treat the poison but was unsuccessful—the black discoloration quickly spread to the rest of his body, coursing across his skin. He began shivering and babbling incoherently with dementia. Finally going into shock, fits of vomiting and convulsions took over. When his eyes bulged, I knew it was too late, for inflammation of the brain is fatal. The poison had killed him within moments.

We had suffered three fatalities and our divers managed to bring up only four normal pearls from the depths. Appalled, Verik has decided that further risk outweighs the value of the still-rumored giant pearls and has forbidden all future diving expeditions.

Physiology of the Greenvise

19th of Goodmonth, 593 CY

Today I came upon a clearing where it seemed a herd of dinosaurs had recently stampeded. The footprints were massive and the devastation to the area immense—likely caused by a herd of diplodocuses or other large herbivores. There were no signs of an attacker's footprints, leading me to believe that the panic's source had come from the sky.

As I was studying the ruined landscape, I discovered a large plant, a greenvise once nearly 15 feet tall, fatally trampled into the ground. Its still huge, flytraplike mouths twitched violently—seemingly hungry even in death—and spasms ran down the length of its main stalk, causing the plant's tendrils to flutter and make a sound like someone shaking a tree.

About halfway down the stalk that served as the greenvise's throat a pulsing bulge appeared to be the source of the plant's post-death contractions. Whatever was inside the carnivorous weed was still alive, struggling to escape. When I sliced open the stalk to try to free whatever was trapped within, I encountered some resistance—the greenvise's thick stem proving tougher to carve than a ripe melon. Viscous froth spewed from the incision and

oozed its way to the ground, reminding me of the saliva of a fleshy creature—except that this reeked of sap.

Lining the inside of the stalk ran rows of dense thorns protruding down toward the plant's gut, arrayed in such a fashion as to prevent captured prey from escaping back up to the maw. I could see a sizable frog peering up at me through the thorns, desperately trying to push past the barbs to reach the opening I had created. I spoke to it in an attempt to calm it, but the traumatized thing was fully intent on escape. The frog must have kicked one of the rooty organs that once guided the greenvise's locomotion, for one of the plant's tendrils convulsed, knocking me off my feet and pinning me to the ground.

Struggling to free myself, I heard the flap of powerful wings and stilled myself at the sight of a pair of wyverns scouring the carnage. These creatures were likely the culprits behind the stampede, returning to pick over the devastation. Instinctively, I shifted myself into a small snake and slowly slithered away from the remains of the man-eating bush, seeking a hiding place where I could wait for the predators to depart. Behind me, I heard the lesser dragons tearing into the greenvise, not discriminating between frog and plant. At least the poor creature did not suffer long.

Aranea Habitat

15th of Harvester, 593 CY

I cannot put to words the sense of grief and guilt that consumes me. By now, Hatoi is surely dead, a victim of an unspeakable fate I unwittingly had a hand in weaving. If only I had heeded his warnings, he would still be here with me as I write this. For the thousandth time I ask why I ignored him, foolishly venturing into a darkened hollow in the eastern jungle where I noticed even the thunder lizards feared to tread. There, my curiosity cost me and my friend dearly.

As we entered the vale, made eternally dark by the dense jungle canopy, I immediately felt something was

An unlucky victim of the Aranea.

watching us. At first, I shrugged it off as nerves, but it became increasingly difficult to keep Hatoi calm. When he suddenly stopped and started hissing, staring intently into the darkness, I halted in deference to his keener senses. It was then that I became aware that we had been walking beneath a floating maze of spider webs strung through the trees above. Disgusting corpse husks dangled from the rope-thick strands like macabre Midwinter ornaments. Yet, even more terrifyingly, something had purposefully positioned the carcasses, forming rotting shelters as sickening as they were crude.

All of the hairs on my body stood on end when I caught a glimpse of movement. Praying for my eyes to adjust to the darkness, I could barely see them: giant, horrifying spiders slowly descending from their webs, seemingly hovering in mid-air and gesturing with their front appendages—disgustingly elongated arms with multi-knuckled hands. Although I had never seen one, I took these creatures for aranea—rare and rumored spiderlike beings storied to carry ill-mannered children off to their evil forest kingdom.

I didn't have the opportunity to look closer or attempt to speak to the creatures as the surrounding jungle suddenly came alive with indistinct, sinister shadows and the sounds of slinking things. Despite the activity, I could sense nothing other than Hatoi, the spider things, and myself. Even now, I don't know if something was actually there, or if those images and noises were mere figments meant to drive us to some deadlier trap.

Regardless, an overwhelming need to flee consumed me, and I prayed to Ehlonna to steel my nerve. I don't know what came over poor Hatoi, though, because he bolted, heading deeper into the hollow as if charging one of the spiders, a terrified but determined look on his face. I can't help but wonder if he was trying to defend me. I had scarcely a moment to call out before I saw his peril, each bound into the undergrowth covering him more and more in thick strands of webbing, ghostly ropes slipping around him like wet nooses. The sounds of him calling out to me as he was hefted into the silken nightmare above still ring in my ears, and through my own screams I thought I heard a chittering arachnid laughter that will ever torture my nightmares.

Conclusion

1st of Sunsebb, 593 CY

Some time has passed since I left Farshore and—in light of the recent tragedy—this is likely to be my last entry. When we return to Sasserine, I shall deposit the bulk of this work into the family vault for safekeeping until such a time that I can organize my notes and publish a full dissertation of the island's ecosystem. Whatever final form my observations take, though, I plan to dedicate the work to those souls who lost their lives in that unforgiving land. I hope their sacrifices might serve as a warning of the savage nature and primal ferocity that epitomizes the aptly named Isle of Dread.

Dread on the Isle

by Jason Bulmahn, Steve Greer, and Gary Holian • illustrated by Ben Wootten and Steve Ellis

The savage tide is rising and the waters are far from calm. In order to keep you afloat, this article series presents you, the player, with the tips, tricks, and tools you need to keep your head above water. While the pages of DUNGEON present DMs with every vile plot and cunning monster needed to run the Savage Tide Adventure Path, DRAGON offers details and options to help you fight back. This month's installment gives you a host of rumors about the legendary Isle of Dread, new options for characters with animal companions and familiars, as well as ideas for new characters who might be found in the isle's dangerous jungles.

ADVENTURE TIE

This installment of Savage Tidings links to the fourth episode of the Adventure Path, "Here There be Monsters," presented in DUNGEON #142.

Animals of the Isle

Druids and rangers traveling across the Isle of Dread soon find that the creatures native to the island are unlike those found anywhere else. Naturally, some of these creatures might make for great animal companions. Wizards and sorcerers in search of new familiars might discover some of these creatures fit the role perfectly as well. Even those without

a special bond to a creature might find a number of the inhabitants of the Isle of Dread useful as mounts. You should consult with your DM before selecting any of these creatures to determine which he allows as well as any other options not presented here.

Animal Companions

The lists in the *Player's Handbook* provide a wide variety of options when choosing an animal companion. While many of these creatures can be found on the Isle of Dread, some cannot, and others native to the isle make for fine choices. The following list of animals can be used by druids or rangers seeking new companions on the island. While most are from the *Monster Manual*, some of these creatures can be found in *Monster Manual II* (*MMII*), *Monster Manual III* (*MMIII*), *Monster Manual IV* (*MMIV*), or the *Fiend Folio* (*FF*). Other dinosaurs, found in DRAGON #318, might also make for a perfect animal companion (or familiar).

1st Level or Higher
Dire rat
Eagle (animal)
Hawk (animal)
Owl (animal)
Snake, Medium viper (animal)
Snake, Small viper (animal)
Swindlespitter (dinosaur, *MMIII*)

4th Level or Higher (Level –3)
Ape (animal)
Boar (animal)
Crocodile (animal)
Dire bat
Dire hawk (*MMII*)
Dire weasel
Fleshraker (dinosaur, *MMIII*)
Lizard, monitor (animal)
Sailsnake (*MMIV*)
Shark, large (animal)
Snake, constrictor (animal)
Snake, large viper (animal)

7th Level or Higher (Level –6)
Crocodile, giant (animal)
Cryptoclidus (dinosaur, *MMII*)
Deinonychus (dinosaur)
Dire ape
Dire boar
Dire toad (*MMII*)
Elasmosaurus (dinosaur)
Snake, Huge viper (animal)
Terror bird (*FF*)

10th Level or Higher (Level –9)
Bloodstriker (dinosaur, *MMIII*)
Dire snake (*MMII*)
Legendary eagle (*MMII*)
Megaraptor (dinosaur)
Sea tiger (*MMIII*)
Shark, Huge (animal)
Snake, giant constrictor (animal)

13th Level or Higher (Level –12)
Allosaurus (dinosaur, *MMII*)
Ankylosaurus (dinosaur, *MMII*)
Legendary ape (*MMII*)
Octopus, giant (animal)

16th Level or Higher (Level –15)
Dire shark
Legendary snake (*MMII*)
Quetzalcoatlus (*MMII*)
Squid, giant (animal)
Triceratops (dinosaur)
Tyrannosaurus (dinosaur)

Familiars

Sorcerers and wizards are rarely found without some sort of small creature soaring above them or perching on their shoulders. Those visiting the Isle of Dread might find they have a number of additional options when choosing familiars. While the bat, hawk, lizard, owl, rat, snake, and toad familiars can all be found on the island, the other standard choices cannot. In addition, the following creatures can be called to serve. Note than none of these choices require the Improved Familiar feat.

Monkey: Tiny monkeys can be found all across the Isle of Dread, hiding in the trees and avoiding larger predators. As familiars, monkeys tend to be curious and easily agitated, spending much of their time climbing about their masters or grooming them. Use the statistics for a monkey found on page 276 of the *Monster Manual*. A monkey can be taken as a familiar by a 1st-level spellcaster. A character with a monkey familiar gains a +3 bonus on Climb checks.

Needletooth: This Tiny dinosaur is known for traveling in packs and for its bloodthirsty nature. Alone as familiars, they can be quite territorial about their masters, snipping at anyone who draws too close. Use the statistics for the lizard found on page 275 of the *Monster Manual*. In addition, anyone bit by a needletooth bleeds for 1 round, losing 1 hit point the following round. This bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic. A needletooth can be taken as a familiar by a 1st-level spellcaster. A character with a needletooth familiar gains a +3 bonus on Hide checks in forest or jungle environments.

Parrot: These colorful birds are found all over the Isle of Dread. Use the same statistics for the raven found on page 278 of the *Monster Manual*. A parrot can speak one language of its master's choosing as a supernatural ability. A character with a parrot familiar gains a +3 bonus on Appraise checks. A parrot can be taken as a familiar by a 1st-level spellcaster.

Mounts

While few creatures on the Isle of Dread make for natural mounts, some could be trained to serve as such with a significant amount of time and patience. A paladin might find a number of dinosaurs and other creatures suitable to serve as his mount. Note that your DM

WHAT DO YOU KNOW: THE ISLE OF DREAD

The "Ecology of the Isle of Dread," on page 58 of this issue, contains an extensive treatise covering the isle and its inhabitants. Larissa Vanderboren wrote the report during her time spent there, while her husband was busy founding the colony of Farshore. Kept in the Vanderboren vault for years, the journal is readily available as reference should you need it. The poster map contained in this issue is from that same journal and might also prove quite valuable.

Rumors

In addition to the journal, there are many tales and stories concerning the Isle of Dread and its inhabitants, the Olman. While most of them are assuredly false, some might hold a grain of truth.

- The Olman observe a form of totemic ancestor worship and animate some of their dead. They consider this a natural thing.
- A great plateau sits at the island's center, where ancient terrible gods slumber. Those who defile that sacred place risk waking them.
- Natives found on the islands east of the seven Olman villages are feral cannibals who attack and ritually consume strangers. They are known for their war drums and often form raiding parties on outrigger canoes.
- Spider demons dwell in the jungle. They seek to enslave and experiment on anyone who comes into their grasp.
- The Isle of Dread is filled with dinosaurs and other horrible monsters. The natives only go beyond the safety of their Great Wall in large numbers.
- Avoid the mysterious fogs on the main island at any cost. They herald the arrival of more dire creatures to our world. Never step into the heart of the fog or you won't return to this world ever again!
- As dangerous as the island's surface is, the world below the island is far worse. Great cavernous spaces beneath the jungle hold titanic water demons, performing foul rites and bloody sacrifices.

has the final say over what mounts are available and you should check before taking one of these dangerous creatures. See page 204 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for additional rules concerning unusual mounts.

A paladin of 6th level or higher can use a deinonychus (dinosaur), dire bat, giant lizard, or Large monstrous spider as a mount. At 7th level, a dire boar, giant eagle, rhinoceros, sea cat, and terror bird (*FF*) become available. At 8th level, a paladin might find a griffon as a mount. At 9th level, a bloodstriker dinosaur (*MMIII*) or megaraptor (dinosaur) become viable choices. A paladin of 10th level or higher can use an allosaurus (*MMII*) or ankylosaurus (*MMII*) as a mount. At 12th level, a paladin might gain a mastodon (*MMIII*), quetzalcoatlus (dinosaur, *MMII*), triceratops (dinosaur), or tyrannosaurus (dinosaur).

While these represent just some of the choices, your DM might remove or add creatures to this list.

Replacement PCs

Death is an unfortunate possibility of every adventurer's life. Fortunately, even on the Isle of Dread, new characters can be found among the native population. Here are just a few of the options, from the fierce Olman to the monstrous aranea.

Aranea

A sizeable tribe of these shapeshifting spiders lives on the Isle of Dread. From time to time, outcasts find themselves in search of companionship and adventure. With their ability to take on humanoid form, they might even keep their true nature a secret until companions have earned their trust, instead posing as lost explorers or travelers until the time is right. Aranea have 3 monstrous Hit Dice and a level adjustment of +4, making the sample creature on page 15 of the *Monster Manual* a perfect choice for a replacement 7th-level player character. Aranea have the following racial ability modifiers: Dexterity +4, Constitution +4, Intelligence +4, Wisdom +2, and Charisma +4. Use these modifiers if generating unique ability scores for an aranea player character.

Lizardfolk

Adventurers and Olman are not the only explorers to be found on the Isle of Dread. Warriors from a large tribe of lizardfolk are often encountered hunting the vast jungles. These reptilian humanoids know a great deal about the jungle and respect its fierce predators, but they are not above roasting an Olman for a tribal feast if one crosses their path. Not all lizardfolk are so brutal, though, and a lizardfolk player character might make a noble warrior.

Use the rules for lizardfolk characters presented on page 169 of the *Monster Manual*. Lizardfolk from the Isle of Dread can learn Olman, Phanaton, or Sylvan as bonus languages instead of Goblin, Gnoll, or Orc.

Olman

The Olman have lived on the Isle of Dread for countless ages in small villages separated from the body of the island by a gigantic wall. While they are dedicated to their tribes, numerous individuals have left over

the years to explore the world beyond. Many have traveled to the interior of the Isle never to be seen again, but others have returned bringing back tales of harrowing adventure. While traversing the island, it is quite possible to run into one of these natives whose interests in exploration and expert knowledge of geography could prove vital.

The Olman are divided into four clans, each of which venerates a fierce animal: the elk, hawk, tiger, and sea turtle. Each clan has its own proud traditions and rituals, but each comes to the defense of the others in times of crisis. While the leader of each clan is male, the leader of each village is female, ensuring a balance of power and opinions. Olman are not afraid of outsiders, instead finding them curious and almost foolish with their determination to explore the deadly island.

Olman are ordinary humans in all respects. All Olman learn their native tongue (Olman) instead of Common, but those who have frequent relations with outsiders quickly pick it up.

Phanaton

Known to live all across the Isle of Dread are a race of Small creatures that appear to be a cross between a raccoon and a monkey, with gray to brown fur, long prehensile tails, and thin membranes stretching between their arms and legs. These creatures, known as phanatons, are not unintelligent animals, as many first assume. They live in small villages high up in the canopy of the jungle, safe from the predators that dwell below. Organized into small clans, the phanatons have kings and war chiefs who make most of the important decisions, while the rest tend to the forest and the needs of the whole.

While afraid of others at first, phanatons can become quite friendly once a creature has proven that it means no harm to the clan or the nearby forest that sustains it. Some phanatons even agree to travel with other creatures, acting as guides or scouts. As such, phanaton adventurers are not uncommon. Phanatons despise spiders and spiderlike creatures, such as the aranea, attacking them on sight so long as the odds are in their favor.

Phanatons have large eyes hidden in a mask of darker fur. Their monkeylike hands have opposable thumbs and can be used for a variety of tasks. While their feet are flexible, they cannot be used to carry anything of weight or wield any weapons or shields. The tails of phanatons are almost four-feet long, which they use to assist in jumping and climbing. Phanatons speak their own language of hoots, chatters, and clicks.

Phanatons possess the following racial traits.

— –2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, –2 Constitution.

— Small size. +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, –4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits 3/4 those of Medium characters.

— A phanaton's base speed is 20 feet.

— Low-light vision.

— Natural Weapon: Bite (1d4).

— Forest Awareness (Ex): Phanatons have an empathic awareness in forests, which gives them a +1 racial bonus on all saving throws in forest locations.

— Gliding (Ex): A phanaton can use its wings to glide, negating damage from a fall of any height and allowing 20 feet of forward travel for every 5 feet of descent. Phanatons glide at a speed of 20 feet (average maneuverability). Even if a phanaton's maneuverability improves, it can't hover while gliding. A phanaton can't glide while carrying a medium or heavy load. If a phanaton becomes unconscious or helpless while in midair it cannot keep itself aloft and falls.

— +4 racial bonus on Move silently checks (+8 in forest areas), +2 racial bonus on Climb, Jump, Listen, and Spot checks.

— Automatic Languages: Phanaton, Elven. Bonus Languages: Sylvan, Goblin.

— Favored Class: Rogue.

FORGOTTEN REALMS

VOLO'S GUIDE

Well met again, gentles all!

'Tis I, the famous wayfarer, fearless adventurer, and companion-to-kings Volothamp Geddarm, better known across all Faerun as "Volo," at thy service.

Despite what divers wizards, petty rulers, and angry husbands have claimed from time to time, the only service of worth I can offer is as a guide to secrets, forgotten treasures, and too-little-known colorful details of life in the Realms.

Wherefore, here I am, redeemed by the good offices of no less notorious a personage than Elminster, the sage of Shadowdale, known to many as a puissant wizard-but to far fewer as the sometime lover of divine Mystra, the goddess of magic herself! Once more I tread fair kingdoms and perilous wilderlands, and return to share lore that's exciting, or essential to your survival, or just plain juicy.

Few of us have sat kingly thrones, and fewer still have lowered backsides onto magic thrones. I have. Of some sittings, such as upon the cozy lap of Queen -----, I dare not speak, for fear of losing my head. Yet I am nonetheless proud to bring you what follows.

If it pleases, I urge you to remember with favor the name of:

Volo
(Volothamp Geddarm)

Lost Regalia of the North: The Toppled Thrones

by Eric L. Boyd, with special introduction by Ed Greenwood • illustrated by Andrew Hou

The detritus of countless kingdoms litters the Forgotten Realms, but nowhere is that more true than in the Savage Frontier. The lands of the North have always been rich in resources but particularly inhospitable to civilization and, as a result, for millennia kingdoms have risen and fallen with astonishing regularity along the Swordsea coast and the banks of the rivers Dessarin and Delimibiyr. Nonetheless, every petty lordling and would-be tyrant to plant a banner in the North seems to have been convinced that he or she was the progenitor of a dynasty that would stretch for generations and, as such, required regalia befitting his or her station. Due to such dreams, treasure hordes throughout the Savage Frontier are littered with the crests, crowns, rings, scepters, swords of state, and thrones of minor princelings long forgotten by history.

Thrones are often enchanted both to protect those who sit on them and to impress those who seek an audience before them. Many such seats of power exhibit an array of magical powers commensurate with that of a minor artifact or relic. Typically, each throne is unique, reflecting the history of the realm for which it was created. Although rarely found, the discovery of an ancient throne in a dragon's horde or lost amid the rubble of some ancient ruin by a company of adventurers betokens wealth and power far beyond that imbued in most objects enspelled by the Art. The following

is an accounting of some of the more noteworthy seats of power from ages past and the historical context of the realms that gave birth to them.

Bloodbone Throne of Uruth

Many treasures of Uruth Ukrypt were plundered under the baneful gaze of the Kingslayer Star in the Year of the Dracorage (1018 DR), including the *Bloodbone Throne of Uruth*. The seat of Uruth Ukrypt's first three kings was lost to Shammagar the black dragon during his plundering of the dwarf-built citadel of Melairrin. More than three centuries later, the wyrm lost the *Bloodbone Throne* in turn to Asilther Graelor, a beautiful half-elven rogue now famous for her theft of nearly his entire hoard.

Asilther is thought to have sent the royal seat of Uruth Ukrypt to the Herald's Holdfast for archival during her hasty disposition of the dragon's hoard, but, if she actually did so, it never arrived. It is almost certain she does not have the throne, for an intercepted missive from Mintiper Moonsilver to the Harpers of Berdusk indicates his concern at its mystifying disappearance during an ambush near the town of Nesmé. Of late, there have been some reports from the southwestern reaches of the High Forest of an antlered orc king who sits atop a bone throne bathed in blood, but whether or not such tales are true, let alone refer to the *Bloodbone Throne*, are unknown at this time.

Fashioned from the skulls and bones of the fallen defenders of Uthtower and Phalorm, the *Bloodbone Throne of Uruth* resembles a heap of shattered skeletons more than 12 feet in diameter and 10 feet in height, magically fused into a single seat of power. The polished skulls of six princes of Phalorm are paired to serve as steps up to the seat of the throne, itself shaped from the ribcage of a great crag cat of the North. The back of the throne is shaped in the form of a triangular stack of skulls, each sporting the single eye of Gruumsh.

Whomever sits atop the *Bloodbone Throne of Uruth* can call on its significant magical powers. These powers include the ability to enshroud the throne with the malevolent darkness of an *unholy aura* once per day and to speak as desired with the authority of a *greater command*. Thrice per day, all the skulls of the *Bloodbone Throne* can be instructed to belch forth a cold, cloying cloud of greasy darkness akin to the effects of an *unholy blight*. Anyone who sits atop the Bloodbone Throne for at least 3 consecutive rounds is cloaked in a dragon-shaped cocoon of bones and negative energy akin to the effects of a *death dragon* spell (see *Magic of Faerûn*) when they arise from the legacy of Uruth.

Once per day, whomever sits atop the *Bloodbone Throne of Uruth* can unleash a torrent of blood that pours forth from every aperture in every skull which then pools around the base of the throne. If the blood created by the throne's namesake power is allowed to pour forth for only 1 round, the blood rises up in the form of a Small "blood elemental." If allowed to pour forth for 2 rounds, the blood can be formed into a Medium "blood elemental." Likewise, if allowed to pour forth for 4 rounds, the blood can be formed into a Large "blood elemental." If given a full 8 rounds or longer to form, the blood forms into a Huge "blood elemental," the largest such creature the *Bloodbone Throne* can create. In all cases, a "blood" elemental is equivalent in power to a water elemental of similar size, with one exception: a successful attack ignites the victim's blood for 1 round, dealing an additional 1d6 points of fire damage.

Strong varied; CL 15th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *burning blood (Spell Compendium), death dragon (Magic of Faerûn), greater command, planar ally, unholy aura, unholy blight;* Market Price: 91,000 gp; Weight: 4,000 lb.

Shining Thrones of Splendarrmornn

The Royal Caverns of Splendarrmornn were stripped of much—if not all—of their treasure by the foul forces of Hellgate Keep, and they are now home to many sorts of undead and fell creatures of even greater evil. Two of the most important Ammarindan artifacts to apparently escape their plundering were the golemlike *Shining Thrones of Splendarrmornn*, both of which vanished during the fighting in the Year of the Curse (882 DR) as a horde of fiends overran the realm.

The *Kingthrone of Splendarrmornn* vanished during the Battle of Karscragg, which unfolded near the confluence of the Rivers Delimibiyr and Heartsblood. As the Ammarindan and Eaerlanni armies made their final, futile stand against the demonic hordes flooding down the Delimibiyr

valley from fallen Ascalhorn, the dwarven queen's cousin, Kulduke Daggan "the Hammer" Rockfist, blood of Olaurin, donned the *Kingthrone* in defense of the realm. In the absence of a king to lead the Stout Folk, the Kulduke had the strongest royal bloodline of any living male dwarf, a birthright that obligated him to employ the *Kingthrone* and lead the dwarven armies into the fray. It is said that Daggan slew a score or more fiends ere he vanished into the High Forest near the end of the battle in pursuit of a murmur of vrocks, each of whom clutched a struggling dwarven warrior in its claws. All but one of those dwarves emerged from the High Forest thanks to Daggan's relentless pursuit of the vulturelike fiends, but neither the Kulduke nor the *Kingthrone* were seen again for centuries. The Nine, a now-disbanded company of adventurers whose former stronghold lies on the banks of the Unicorn Run, reportedly battled the *Kingthrone* while unsuccessfully hunting Grimnoshtasdrano, the "Riddling Dragon," amid the Endless Caverns of the High Forest. If this most recent account of the *Kingthrone* is to be believed, the Kulduke's spirit remains trapped within the royal seat, attacking all living creatures under the delusion that they are fiends.

The *Queenthrone of Splendarrmornn* was lost, along with the rest of the valiant dwarven rearguard, in the savage fighting in the Vale of Naurogloth (Bleached Bones Pass) as the surviving Stout Folk of Ammarindar fled southward to Oghrann. Queen Helmma's company bought time with their lives for the less warlike of their people to flee the orc raiders who sought to slay the dwarven refugees. As every dwarf in the rearguard died during the Battle of Bleached Bones, including their valiant queen, there were no survivors to keep the *Queenthrone* from falling into orc hands. In the centuries since Ammarindar's fall, there have been periodic reports from that region of an intricately carved dwarven golem employed by one orc tribe or another in their endless battles for tribal supremacy, but no expedition has ever returned from the Greypeak Mountains with reports of having actually observed the *Queenthrone*.

The *Shining Thrones of Splendarrmornn* resemble intricately carved darksteel seats, one fashioned to resemble a royal queen bearing the likeness of Berronar Truesilver and the other shaped to resemble a royal king bearing the likeness of Moradin the Soulforger. The lap of each statue serves as the throne's seat, and the arms and chest of each construct serve as the royal chair's arms and backs. Each of the *Shining Thrones* wears a three-horned crown tipped with flashing beljurils and is engraved with all manner of ancient runes filigreed in gold, collectively thought to imbue the thrones with much of their magical power.

Anyone seated on either one of the *Shining Thrones* can call on any of its powers by silent act of will, but only one such power may be employed per round. Powers of the *Kingthrone* include *commune with earth, divine power,* and *silverbeard.* Powers of the *Queenthrone* include *spell resistance, stone tell,* and *stoneskin.* Powers shared in common by both *Shining Thrones* include the ability of occupants to merge their form into the seat (in a fashion similar to *meld into stone*) and then animate the thrones as iron golems under their direct control. If an iron golem is slain, the merged occupant is immediately expelled, unharmed.

Kingthrone: Strong varied; CL 16th; Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *cloudkill, commune with earth* (see *Races of Faerûn*), *divine power, geas/quest, limited wish, meld into stone, polymorph any object, silverbeard* (see *Magic of Faerûn*), creator must be a dwarf; Market Price: 372,200 gp; Weight: 5,000 lb.

Queenthrone: Strong varied; CL 16th; Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *cloudkill, geas/quest, limited wish, meld into stone, polymorph any object, spell resistance, stone tell, stoneskin,* creator must be a dwarf; Market Price: 490,100 gp; Weight: 5,000 lb.

Soaring Throne of the Witch-Queen

During her thirty-three-year reign over Stornanter, Laeral crafted numerous unique spells and magic items, many of which still survive today. The most famous of her creations from this period was the result of a potent collaboration with the Court Wizard of Stornanter, Malek Aldhanek. The *Soaring Throne of the Witch-Queen* is a glassteel seat shaped in the form of a rampant griffon. The griffon's chest forms the back of the throne, while its forelegs serve as chair arms.

The griffon's wings curve between its legs, forming the sides of the crystalline throne.

When Laeral all but quit her court following the apparent death of Malek, she kept with her Stornanter's royal seat, regularly employing its ability to transform into a crystalline griffon to fly about the realm (and, not incidentally, keeping it out of the hands of overly ambitious courtiers). The last recorded sighting of the *Soaring Throne* occurred in the Year of the Leaping Lion (834 DR), when the Witch-Queen battled a gigantic kraken just outside of Port Llast's harbor during a raging storm. Laeral eventually managed to drive off the monster with a barrage of fearsome spells, but the monstrous cephalopod's grasping tentacles dragged the griffon construct with it back into the depths.

Today, the *Soaring Throne* lies amid the sunken ruins of Ascarle, a long-lost elven city off the coast of Trisk (the western isle of the Purple Rocks), in the hoard of the Slarkrethrel, the Chosen of Umberlee. The legendary kraken has grown greatly in power in the centuries since its battle with the Witch-Queen, and its tentacles now extend the length of the Sword Coast through its command of the secretive Kraken Society. Laeral is undoubtedly aware of the *Soaring Throne's* approximate location, but the legendary wizardress has never seen fit to reclaim the lost seat of Stornanter, no doubt in part due to her shame in failing the citizenry of that lost realm. Should a daring band of powerful adventurers someday retrieve the realm's royal seat from its watery grave, Lady Arunsun would undoubtedly cede it to them willingly if they sought to refound her ancient realm with good and noble purpose.

Although neither Laeral nor Khelben has ever precisely detailed the powers of the *Soaring Throne of the Witch-Queen*, sufficient reports exist in the archives of the Arcane Brotherhood to detail the properties of the royal seat. Constructed of glassteel, a rare material fabricated by avariels and sun elves, the *Soaring Throne* has strength beyond iron, with a hardness of 20 and 40 hit points per inch of thickness. At will, once per round, anyone sitting on the *Soaring Throne* may employ the spells *Mordenkainen's sword, shield, spell turning,* or *whispering wind.* The throne also acts as a *figurine of wondrous power* (albeit without the normal size alteration), transforming into an advanced 15 HD griffon for as long as 8 hours a day. Unlike a normal figurine, however, if slain the griffon simply reverts (intact) to crystalline form and cannot reanimate until at least ten days have passed.

Strong Transmutation; CL 13th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects, Mordenkainen's sword, shield, spell turning, whispering wind;* Market Price: 617,150 gp; Weight: 5,000 lb.

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EBERRON

DRAGONMARKS

SORCERERS IN EBERRON

by Keith Baker • illustrated by Eric Dechamps

There are things they don't want you to know. The Arcane Congress. The University of Wynarn. The Korranberg Chronicle. My former brothers of House Sivis. These are the masters of knowledge, and if you think they will ever reveal all that they know, you are a fool.

My grandfather had a dream. Tasker Torralyn d'Sivis believed that information wanted to be free. But the viceroys of House Sivis saw only the opportunity to squeeze gold from the people of Khorvaire. I was given my grandfather's name, and I will see his dream realized. I will find the truths they have held hidden, from the secrets of the thirteen planes to the mysteries of magic and history. You heroes of the modern age, listen to the wind. For I will find you, and I will tell you the things you need to know.

—Tasker, Excoriate of House Sivis

Magic is power. Across Eberron, all levels of society recognize this simple truth. Magic exists, and the peoples of Eberron have uncovered many ways to harness it, such as through the arcane studies of wizards, the pure faith of clerics, or the brilliant insights of artificers. Whether a person devotes his life to tomes of magic or religious rituals, all of these mystical traditions require study and devotion, and they are paths that a student can rarely master without the aid of skilled teachers.

Other forms of power exist, and they cannot be learned. Passed down through blood, the most common and visible of these gifts are the dragonmarks. The bearer of a dragonmark can produce one or more magical effects without training. Many sages believe these marks tie in to the legendary prophecy studied by the dragons of Argonnessen—that in some way, those who bear these marks are agents of the prophecy, pawns on a playing board too vast for mortal eyes to see.

Then there are sorcerers.

Like the dragonmarked, the sorcerer gains his power inherently. It takes time for a sorcerer to unlock his full potential, but he is beholden to no outside force and he need not rely on ancient texts or arcane lore. Over the course of centuries, sages have developed dozens of theories as to the source of the sorcerer's ability to cast spells. Some attribute this magical affinity to inhuman heritage—the blood of dragons, fey, or fiends—carrying the aptitude of his nonhuman ancestor. While a traditional sorcerer can claim any heritage he wishes, two paths have specific game effects: the dragonmarked sorcerers and the legacy of the progenitors.

DRAGONMARKED SORCERERS

In a sense, a dragonmark itself represents a limited manifestation of sorcerous potential—an inborn ability to wield magical energy. As a rule, slightly more than half of the heirs of a dragonmarked house develop the dragonmark of their line. A greater power can rise among the scions of a dragonmarked line, thanks to the gifts of the dragonmarked sorcerer. While an heir to the Mark of Shadow can weave an illusion or scry an enemy, a sorcerer of the same line can do that and more, wrapping himself in a cloak of invisibility and

DRAGONMARKED SORCERER [GENERAL]

You possess greater magical versatility than most of those who share your dragonmark.

Prerequisites: Member of appropriate dragonmarked race and house, does not possess an existing dragonmark, sorcerer level 1st.

Benefit: Add all sorcerer spells from your dragonmarked house's least, lesser, and greater dragonmarks to your list of known spells, even if you are too low of level to cast them yet (you cannot cast these spells until you are of the appropriate level to do so). You also gain a physical dragonmark, although this does not provide you with spell-like abilities. Initially, this resembles the least dragonmark of your house. When you gain the ability to cast a spell replicating the power of a lesser or greater dragonmark, your mark changes to the appropriate shape and size.

Special: Once you take this feat, you may not take Aberrant Dragonmark, Greater Dragonmark, Least Dragonmark, Lesser Dragonmark, nor may you take this feat if you already have one of these.

craft illusions terrifying enough to kill his victims.

A dragonmarked sorcerer possesses the dragonmark of his house but none of the usual spell-like abilities associated with the mark. Instead, he can produce those effects as sorcerer spells, along with any other spells he selects as he advances through the class. Most dragonmarked sorcerers possess spells related to their mark. This is ultimately up to the DM or the player creating the sorcerer, and while a dragonmarked sorcerer can have spells not related to his family's mark, such choices tend to stand out.

In addition to the physical dragonmark, many dragonmarked sorcerers develop further markings on their skin: complex patterns of lines that resemble the dragonmark but spread out across the sorcerer's body. These typically widen and grow as the sorcerer gains power, and a high-level sorcerer might have patterns covering nearly every inch of skin. This cosmetic effect does not occur in all heirs, and it has no actual bearing on a sorcerer's abilities other than to indicate in the broadest of terms how powerful he is.

As dragonmarked sorcerers have access to a greater and more versatile spell list than their kin, they often rise to positions of influence within

their houses. Many such sorcerers, then, find the Favored in House feat quite appropriate. If a dragonmarked sorcerer develops his powers outside of the structure of the house—usually the case with foundlings whose parents were exiled for some crime—the barons of the line go to considerable lengths to convince the character to rejoin the house. The houses always seek to control the talents of a dragonmarked sorcerer, and an heir who chooses to operate outside of his house might receive violent incentives to return to the fold.

Not all sorcerers within dragonmarked houses possess the Dragonmarked Sorcerer feat. This feat is particularly rare in House Jorasco, although traditional sorcerers without the feat do belong to the house.

LEGACY OF THE PROGENITORS

Many have heard the tale that sorcerers possess the blood of dragons. Few realize that the oldest versions of this myth do not refer to mortal dragons, the scaled lords of Argonnessen, but they instead refer to the Progenitor dragons that shaped the world itself: Siberys, the Dragon Above, the shattered ring that surrounds the world; Eberron, the Dragon Between, the earth itself; and Khyber, the Dragon Below, the corrupting darkness that lurks in the depths. According to these most venerable of legends, ancient powers blessed the first sorcerers to continue the ancient battles. Sorcerers of Siberys are charged to avenge the death of the sky dragon and to spread light across the world. The children of Khyber, vessels of darkness, destroy and corrupt all they touch. Those blessed by Eberron must maintain the balance and protect the natural world. These ancient myths also describe the war of the progenitors as a struggle for control of an unknown force—a power understandable only through the Draconic Prophecy. If true, these blessed sorcerers might have a far more significant role to play than that of the dragonmarked houses—a position that might bring them into conflict with the agents of the Chamber and the Lords of Dust.

The gift of the Progenitors is not bound to one race. Any race capable of producing sorcerers can carry the blood of the Three, and according to legend all sorcerous power flows from this source. Kobolds serve as the strongest proponents of these legends, and the dominant kobold cultures of Khorvaire each trace their lineage to one of the progenitors. As the sorcerer's blood reportedly carries his abilities, a number of families and clans have an affinity for birthing sorcerers. Even among those families, though, sorcerous power manifests less frequently than dragonmarks. As a result, many of these sorcerer bloodlines have lost any sense of history or identity, their legacies scattered to such an extent that their links have become unrecognizable. A few remain, however, spread across the many races and nations.

The following examples of sorcerer bloodlines still cling to the legacy of the Progenitors. Player characters and their foes alike might come from one of these clans.

Clan Alarak: In the first age of the dwarven kingdom, the Alarak dwarves were renowned as spellsmiths and war magi. Despite their magical might, they did not seek political power—Alarak's elders said Siberys had charged the clan to protect the dwarves, not rule them. When Mror exiled the fallen heroes, many of the clan's sorcerers traveled with Kolesh Londurak, seeking greater challenges in the world above.

As centuries passed, the line of Alarak dwindled. While powerful sorcerers still emerged from time to time, the family proved unusually infertile. Some whispered of Siberys's anger with the clan for leaving the deep kingdom. When the dwarves reopened the deep pathways and discovered the desolation that lay below, the Alarak elders saw this as proof of their failure: perhaps, if they had remained below, they could have saved the ancient kingdom from destruction.

Today, the Alarak dwarves are among the most dedicated explorers of the deep realms. An Alarak dwarf makes an excellent guide to the Mror regions of Khyber, while an Alarak patron might employ characters to battle the Cult of the Dragon Below or recover a relic of the deep kingdom that has fallen into the hands of the daelkyr. The Alarak clan often charges its members to battle the forces of Khyber, ranging from aberrations and cultists to the Lords of Dust and the other fiends spawned by Khyber at the dawn of time.

The 'Uraash Tribe: Thousands of years ago, the dragon Vvaraak brought knowledge of the druidic mysteries to the orcs of Khorvaire. As he taught, he discovered a tribe of orcs that already possessed a strong bond to magic and nature. Vvaraak told the 'Uraash that they were blessed by Eberron himself, and even as he trained the first Gatekeepers he helped the 'Uraash hone their gift of sorcery. The 'Uraash orcs played a major role in the war against Xoriat, and the daelkyr made a special effort to eradicate the line of sorcerers.

Today, most of the people of the Shadow Marches believe the lords of madness succeeded and the 'Uraash are no more than legend. A few of the 'Uraash orcs survived, however, and over the centuries the tribe has rebuilt itself in the shadows of the swamps. Today the 'Uraash orcs remain in hiding, but their sorcerer-barbarians still battle the Cults of the Dragon Below and other forces of darkness.

The Cold Wind: Khyber stretches beneath the planet, and the blood of Khyber stretches well beyond Khorvaire. Thousands of years ago, a clan of dark sorcerers ruled one of the provinces of Sarlona, using the mystical might of the Dragon Below to enforce their tyrannical rule. As the inspired rose to power

in Sarlona, they systematically destroyed the dark sorcerers and all other groups that might oppose them. Some members of this sorcerer clan, however, fled to the sea only to be shipwrecked on the inhospitable shores of the Demon Wastes. The gifts of Khyber helped them survive in this dangerous land, although madness and savagery claimed many of them.

Today, their descendents form one of the Carrion Tribes of the Demon Wastes, calling themselves the Cold Wind. The blood of Khyber runs strong in this tribe, and the Lords of Dust occasionally recruit powerful sorcerers of the Cold Wind. While sorcerers found in the wastes themselves are feral savages, the rakshasa educate and train those they recruit to function in the world beyond.

VARIANT CLASS FEATURES

The following variant class features represent the pinnacle of the tie between Eberron's sorcerers and its three progenitor dragons.

BLOOD OF EBERRON

You possess a deep bond to Eberron, the Dragon Between, which shapes your sorcerous powers. Myths call Eberron the mother of all natural creatures, giving you a deep bond to the world of nature.

Level: 1st.

Replaces: If you select this class feature, you do not gain the normal list of class skills, nor do you gain a familiar.

Benefit: The following are your sorcerer class skills: Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature), Profession, Spellcraft.

In addition, you gain an animal companion, as a druid of half your sorcerer level. Your druid, ranger, and sorcerer levels stack to determine the abilities of your animal companion.

If you possess the Natural Spell feat, its benefits apply any time that you are in the form of an animal, whether due to wild shape, *polymorph*, or other magical effects.

BLOOD OF KHYBER

You possess a deep bond to Khyber, the Dragon Below, which shapes your sorcerous powers. Your bond with the darkness increases your ability to conjure fiendish creatures and work spells of transmutation.

Level: 1st.

Replaces: If you select this class feature, you do not gain the normal list of class skills, nor do you gain a familiar.

Benefit: The following are your sorcerer class skills: Bluff, Concentration, Craft, Intimidate, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Profession, Spellcraft.

Your caster level increases by 1 whenever you cast spells from the schools of conjuration (summoning) or transmutation. You cannot summon any creature of good alignment. In addition, your caster level decreases by 1 (minimum CL 1st) whenever you cast spells from the schools of abjuration or divination.

BLOOD OF SIBERYS

You possess a deep bond to Siberys, the Dragon Above, which shapes your sorcerous powers. Many believe the Dragon Above is the source of all arcane magic, and the first dragons were born from the blood that fell when Khyber slew Siberys. Your bond to the Dragon Above enhances your ability to channel magic.

Level: 1st.

Replaces: If you select this class feature, you do not gain the normal list of class skills, nor do you gain a familiar.

Benefit: The following are your sorcerer class skills: Bluff, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (the planes), Profession, Spellcraft.

In addition, you add +4 to your effective Charisma for purposes of determining bonus sorcerer spells and the maximum level of spell you can cast. For example, even if your natural Charisma is 14, you can still cast up to 8th-level sorcerer spells. This bonus does not affect saving throw DCs, skill rolls, or provide any of the other benefits dependant on Charisma.

 by Andy Collins • illustrated by Andrew Hou

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage expounds on issues raised by *Player's Handbook II*. Send your questions for the Sage to **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

The beguiler's surprise casting class feature (*Player's Handbook II*, 7) states that the beguiler must "remain in melee with the target." What does that mean?

The beguiler must remain adjacent to the target from the time he feints until the time he makes the attack or casts the spell to be affected. If either the beguiler or the target moves so that they are no longer adjacent, the beguiler loses the benefit of surprise casting.

Can a duskblade (*Player's Handbook II*, 20) using arcane channeling channel ranged touch spells through his weapon attack or is the ability limited to melee touch spells only?

"Touch" spell refers to spells that require a melee touch attack to deliver. The duskblade can't use arcane channeling to deliver a spell that requires a ranged touch attack.

When a duskblade (*Player's Handbook II*, 20) uses arcane channeling to deliver a spell but misses with the weapon attack, is the spell discharged or can he try to deliver the spell again on his next turn?

This follows the normal rule for touch spells; that is, a melee touch spell that misses its target is not discharged.

However, when using the improved version of this class feature gained at 13th level, the spell is discharged at the end of the round regardless of whether you hit or not (as described on page 20).

How does the duskblade's arcane channeling class feature (*Player's Handbook II*, 20) work with spells that allow multiple touch attacks, such as *chill touch*?

For a spell that allows you to make multiple touch attacks against separate creatures (such as *chill touch*), you only channel one touch of the spell through your weapon attack, regardless of the number of touches allowed by the spell. If the spell's duration is instantaneous (as *chill touch*), its effect is expended by a single weapon attack, even if the spell would normally allow multiple simultaneous touches.

If the spell allowed you to make multiple simultaneous touch attacks against the same target, treat it as if you had targeted the enemy struck by your weapon with all the eligible attacks.

The duskblade's arcane channeling class feature says "you can cast any touch spell you know as part of a full attack action, and the spell affects each target you hit in melee combat that round." If you hit the same creature more than once during the full attack action, does the spell affect it each time you hit?

No. The spell affects each target only once.

If a 13th-level duskblade (*Player's Handbook II*, 20) applied a metamagic feat to the touch spell he channeled through his weapon, would the feat's effect apply to each successful attack made as part of the full attack action?

Yes. Unless somehow indicated otherwise by the spell or effect, the full effect of the spell (including metamagic feats and any other effects) would apply to each and every target hit as part of the full attack action.

The duskblade's armored mage class feature (*Player's Handbook II*, 20) allows you to cast spells while wearing a shield with no arcane spell failure. If the duskblade has a sword in one hand and a shield in the other, can the character still cast spells? If not, why carry a shield?

You need a free hand to cast a spell with a somatic component, and to cast a spell with a material or focus component, you need that component at hand (which usually means you need a free hand to manipulate it). The buckler and light shield both allow you to use your shield hand for such activities.

A duskblade using a heavy shield and holding a weapon or other object in his other hand can only cast spells that don't include the components listed above, despite the fact that he ignores the arcane spell failure chance for the heavy shield.

Does the instant daze alternative class feature of the wizard (*Player's Handbook II*, 70) render an attacking creature dazed before the attack is completed, rendering it incapable of finishing the attack?

Yes.

Can a character with Acrobatic Strike (*Player's Handbook II*, 71) claim the +4 bonus against multiple targets in the same round if she uses Tumble to avoid attacks of opportunity from more than one enemy?

Yes, as long as the attack roll takes place before the end of your current turn.

For example, a dervish (*Complete Warrior*, 26) could gain the +4 bonus on attack rolls against each enemy that she attacked during a dervish dance, as long as she had successfully used Tumble to avoid attacks of opportunity from that enemy during that turn.

Can a character with the Adaptive Flanker feat (*Player's Handbook II*, 73) and a spiked chain flank an enemy all by himself (since he can choose to count as occupying the square opposite the enemy as well as his own square)?

No. This feat doesn't let you get around the basic rule of flanking, which is that you need an ally to accomplish it—it just lets you pretend to occupy an extra space when figuring out if you're actually flanking an enemy with your ally.

If a character with Arcane Thesis (*Player's Handbook II*, 74) applies multiple metamagic feats to the chosen spell, is the spell's slot reduced by one level, or by one level per metamagic feat applied?

Arcane Thesis reduces the total spell level of a metamagic-affected spell by one, regardless of the number of metamagic feats applied. An empowered (+2 levels), still (+1 level), silent (+1 level) *fireball* would be 6th level.

Does the Deadeye Shot feat (*Player's Handbook II*, 78) trigger when a particular ally's strike is successful or when any ally's strike versus the named enemy is successful? If the ally misses his attack, does the enemy use its normal AC?

Your readied ranged attack is triggered by any ally striking the particular target.

If the ally misses the attack, your readied ranged attack is not triggered. Since you're not making the ranged attack, the target's AC against that attack is moot.

If I use a reach weapon to strike someone who has activated the Fiery Ki Defense feat (*Player's Handbook II*, 79), do I still take the 1d6 points of fire damage?

Yes. While this feat's effect is similar in many ways to *fire shield*, it does not include that specific exception.

When do I activate Mad Foam Rager (*Player's Handbook II*, 80)—before or after I know the effect that I'm delaying?

After. Effectively, activating the feat "interrupts" the effect, delaying it until the end of your next turn.

Does activating Mad Foam Rager allow me to delay rolling a saving throw (which might let me activate some effect that grants a bonus on the save)?

No. The feat doesn't delay the save, just the effect of the save's success or failure.

If an enemy cleric casts *sound burst* next to you, you'd roll the save normally, then choose whether or not to activate Mad Foam Rager to delay the effect of the spell until the end of your next turn.

Does the bonus from Melee Weapon Mastery (*Player's Handbook II*, 81) stack with bonuses from Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization?

Yes. A character with Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword), and Melee Weapon Mastery (slashing) would have a +3 bonus on attack rolls and a +4 bonus on damage rolls with longswords, and a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls with all other slashing weapons.

If a weapon deals two different types of damage (such as a dagger), could I take Melee Weapon Mastery (*Player's Handbook II*, 81) for both types of damage? And if I did, would both bonuses apply when using a weapon that dealt both of those types of damage simultaneously (such as a morningstar)?

Yes and no.

A character with Weapon Focus (morningstar) and Weapon Specialization (morningstar) could take Melee Weapon Mastery with either bludgeoning weapons or piercing weapons (since the morningstar deals both types of damage), or he could take it once for each.

The feat's bonus wouldn't stack with itself, however, even if the weapon deals both types of damage simultaneously.

Does a spear count as a melee weapon or a ranged weapon for the purpose of qualifying for the Weapon Mastery feats (*Player's Handbook II*, 81–82)?

Both, actually, although you can only gain the benefit of one feat or the other at any one time, and only when using the weapon in the appropriate manner.

For example, if you have Melee Weapon Mastery (piercing), you'd apply the feat's benefit only when using the spear in melee, not when throwing it.

The Weapon Supremacy feat (*Player's Handbook II*, 85) lists Weapon Mastery as a prerequisite. Does this mean Melee Weapon Mastery or Ranged Weapon Mastery?

Weapon Supremacy requires either Melee Weapon Mastery or Ranged Weapon Mastery, depending on whether the weapon is a melee weapon or ranged weapon, respectively.

A character who wishes to select Weapon Supremacy (longsword) must have Melee Weapon Mastery (slashing); to take Weapon Supremacy (longbow) you'd need Ranged Weapon Mastery (piercing).

If a character with the Telling Blow feat (*Player's Handbook II*, 83) scores a critical hit against an enemy in a situation where his skirmish or sneak attack damage would already apply, does he get to add that damage twice?

No. You only get to add your skirmish or sneak attack damage once, even if you meet more than one prerequisite for adding it. (For example, a rogue who flanks a flat-footed enemy doesn't get to add sneak attack damage twice.)

Must everyone in a party belong to the same "team" for the purpose of using the teamwork benefits (*Player's Handbook II*, 157)?

No. As noted on page 158, "A character can join an adventuring party without joining the team that includes the other members of the group." Of course, a character in the party but not in the "team" doesn't gain the teamwork benefits.

It's even technically possible for an adventuring party to have more than one complete "team" within it—the party's barbarian and rogue might be on a team with the Awareness and Crowded Charge team benefits while the druid and wizard belong to a separate team with the Group Trance and Steadfast Resolve teamwork benefits.

It's fairly common for a team to not include pets (even intelligent pets such as familiars and special mounts), due to the added burden of ensuring the pet meets the team member prerequisites.

Dragon

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by Paul Leach • illustrated by Peter Bergting

HISTORICAL NINJAS

The ninja class (from *Complete Adventurer*), capable of using supernatural powers to evade and dispatch foes, offers players a deadly character shrouded in a mixture of legend and historical fact. While the real ninjas of feudal Japan functioned as covert killers, their methods and lore involved much more than weapons and stealth. The ninja masters (*shonin*) taught their pupils to perfect the skills of observation and disguise, abilities as necessary as weapon handling for any spy who wished to live long enough to perform another secret mission on behalf of his lord. You can play a better ninja by taking notes from history and exploring some of the new skill packages, equipment, and feats listed in this article.

The ninja's art, *ninjutsu*, existed as a family affair during the intrigue-laden assassin's golden era between the 15th and 17th centuries, CE. Two of Japan's provinces, Iga and Koga, provided most of the ninjas who aided the warring *daimyos* (warlords) of the period. While opposing leaders sometimes used ninjas to secretly murder each other (an act their honorable samurai could not perform), *daimyos* more often employed them as spies and scouts. Entire villages of ninjas thrived in these provinces, appearing and functioning as normal communities while secretly training cadres of deadly spies. Mentors and apprentices (often fathers and sons) practiced a regimen of acrobatic and survival skills, including climbing, swimming, and foraging. Combat training focused on the short sword, shuriken, and *kusari-gama* (a sickle-headed chain weapon).

The archetypical image of the ninja is the black-hooded killer. Ninjas reserved this outfit, however, for actual assassinations executed in darkness. Most of their espionage work required them to appear as travelers, allowing them to infiltrate a community with as little suspicion as possible. They often disguised themselves as minstrels and monks, as both journeyed frequently. The common folk of feudal Japan rarely strayed far from their homes, and ninjas found it difficult to assume the role of a local. A D&D ninja should not lack for choices of disguises. Even if limited to the adventuring classes, a ninja could pass as almost any of them for a short time.

The ninja used an impressive assortment of specialized equipment for breaking and entering, not unlike what might be found in a set of D&D thieves' tools and climbing kits. They used folding saws and other cutting and prying tools to bypass gates, palisades, and similar wooden obstacles. If they needed to scale a wall, clawed hand and foot attachments supported their natural climbing skill and made them harder to detect than a climber relying on an obvious grappling hook and rope. The ninjas also employed a metal tube listening device for monitoring noise on the other sides of walls and doors.

HISTORICAL NINJA CLASS SKILLS

With DM approval, a historical-based ninja character may substitute Perform (Cha) or Profession (Wis) for Craft (Int) in the class skills list. A character may only choose to make this class skill substitution when he takes his first level in ninja. Even if the character does not learn his original skills in a classic ninja village setting, the ability to adopt a wide variety of crafts and trades increases the ninja's versatility.

Many ninjas find the skill Craft (poisonmaking), from page 97 of *Complete Adventurer*, particularly useful.

HISTORICAL NINJA EQUIPMENT

The *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* provide ninjas with weapons and equipment perfect for combat, espionage, and evasion. Page 144 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* lists a few Asian weapons appropriate for the ninja: the blowgun and the *kusari-gama*. As the blowgun is a simple weapon, all ninjas are already proficient with its use. The *kusari-gama*, a light exotic chain weapon that allows its wielder to use his Dexterity bonus for trip and disarm attempts, requires the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat to use without penalty. Your DM might consider adding the *kusari-gama* to the historic ninja's weapon list, considering its preference by feudal Japan's real ninjas.

A number of special items and kits should find their way into a ninja's repertoire of tricks and aids: caltrops, smokesticks, and tindertwigs prove useful for creating any number of distractions and diversions. A ninja might wish to purchase various masterwork tools that provide a +2 bonus on relevant skill checks, such as the aforementioned listening tube. A character can make her disguises more effective by wearing the appropriate clothing, carrying the right tools (smith's hammer, bard's flute, and so on), and using disguise kits.

In addition, see the *Arms and Equipment Guide*, *Complete Adventurer*, *Complete Scoundrel*, and "Poisonmaking Guide" in DRAGON #349 for more equipment useful to historical ninjas.

NINJA FEATS

The following general feats benefit characters with high Wisdom scores, allowing them to apply this key ability to certain checks. The following *ki* feats grant the ninja greater flexibility in exchange for daily uses from his *ki* pool. A *ki* feat requires the *ki* power class feature and unless otherwise noted costs one daily use of the ninja's *ki* power each time the ninja uses it. Using a *ki* feat is a swift action and does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

INTUITIVE TRAPSMITH [GENERAL]

You rely on intuition instead of intellect when searching rooms or when disabling a trap.

Prerequisite: *Ki* power.

Benefit: Add your Wisdom bonus (rather than your Intelligence bonus) on all Search and Disable Device checks. Using this feat does not expend a daily use of your *ki* power. Its effects are always active.

KARMIC HEALING [KI]

You may channel your *ki* power into healing and banishing weariness from your body.

Prerequisite: *Ki* power.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of *ki* power to heal yourself a number of hit points equal to half your ninja level (minimum 1) multiplied by your Wisdom bonus. Alternatively, you may instead spend one daily use to remove the fatigue condition or reduce the exhausted condition to fatigued.

KI SMITE [KI]

You may channel your *ki* power into melee attacks.

Prerequisite: *Ki* power, sudden strike ability +2d6.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of *ki* power to grant yourself a bonus on your next melee attack roll equal to your Wisdom bonus. You also deal extra damage equal to your ninja level plus your current pool of *ki* power uses (not counting the *ki* use spent to activate this feat).

ONE WITH EARTH AND WATER [GENERAL]

You rely on intuition instead of strength when climbing or swimming.

Prerequisite: *Ki* power.

Benefit: Add your Wisdom bonus (rather than your Strength bonus) on all Climb and Swim checks. Using this feat does not expend a daily use of your *ki* power. Its effects are always active.

SKILL ATTUNEMENT [KI]

You may use your *ki* power to assist your performance of most skills.

Prerequisite: Wis 13, *ki* power (ghost strike).

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of *ki* power to grant yourself a bonus on all skill checks equal to your Wisdom bonus (minimum +1) for a number of rounds equal to one-fifth your ninja level (minimum 1 round). For example, a 3rd-level ninja with Wisdom 13 gains a +1 bonus on all skill checks for 1 round, while a 17th-level ninja with Wisdom 20 gains a +5 bonus on all skill checks for 3 rounds.

WOLF'S BITE [KI]

You temporarily master special attacks.

Prerequisite: *Ki* power.

Benefit: You can spend one daily use of *ki* power to gain access to Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, and Improved Trip for 1 round.

ZEN FORTITUDE [GENERAL]

Your intuitive control of your body allows you to withstand physical hardships.

Prerequisite: *Ki* power.

Benefit: Add your Wisdom modifier (instead of your Constitution modifier) on Fortitude saves. Using this feat does not expend a daily use of your *ki* power. Its effects are always active.

by Mark A. Hart • illustrated by Peter Bergting

ARCANE FOCUS

Casting an arcane spell demands tremendous concentration and mental focus. Whether an arcane spellcaster prepares spells ahead of time or casts spontaneously, she must keep her mind steady and clear of distraction. Indeed, as long as she retains even a single spell slot, her mind holds a reservoir of arcane energy. A spellcaster may use that energy without expending spell slots through a technique known as arcane focus.

Arcane focus works like psionic focus, as described on page 37 of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. Once an arcane spellcaster selects the Arcane Focus feat, she may gain arcane focus as a special use of the Concentration skill. The spellcaster may expend her arcane focus to activate any arcane feat she possesses.

ARCANE FOCUS [GENERAL]

Through concentration and preparation your mind can hold special magical energy.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 1st-level arcane spells.

Benefit: As long as you have at least one arcane spell slot available (either a prepared arcane spell or the ability to cast an arcane spell spontaneously), you may make a DC 20 Concentration check to gain arcane focus. This use of Concentration requires a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Once you acquire arcane focus, you remain focused until you expend it, become unconscious, fall asleep, or cast all available arcane spells.

When you have arcane focus, you may expend your focus as a swift action on any single Concentration check you make thereafter. If you expend your focus for this purpose, treat your Concentration check as if you rolled a 15 (similar to taking 10). You may expend your arcane focus in this way even if you could not normally take 10 on a skill check, such as during combat.

You may instead expend your arcane focus to activate an arcane feat you possess and gain one of the benefits of that feat.

Special: A wizard may select Arcane Focus as a wizard bonus feat.

ARCANE WATCHFULNESS [ARCANE]

You enter a state of hyper-awareness that brings the tiniest details to your attention.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Arcane Focus.

Benefit: When you expend your arcane focus, you may select one of the following three benefits.

Danger Sense: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus on any Spot check you make in the next minute.

Empathic Potential: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus on any Sense Motive check you make in the next minute.

Spatial Awareness: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus on any Search check you make in the next minute.

Special: A wizard may select Watchful Alertness as a wizard bonus feat.

BODY AWARENESS [ARCANE]

Your deep focus grants you a measure of control over your body.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Arcane Focus.

Benefit: When you expend your arcane focus, you may select one of the following three benefits.

Overcome Distraction: You may ignore one of the following conditions for a number of rounds equal to your Wisdom bonus (minimum 1 round): fatigued, nauseated, shaken, or sickened. Alternatively, you may reduce exhausted to fatigued or frightened to shaken for an equal amount of time.

Slowed Breathing: Your breathing slows to imperceptible levels, allowing you to appear dead upon casual observation. Anyone examining you for signs of life must make a DC 20 Heal check or mistake your condition for death. In addition, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus on your Fortitude save to resist the effects of toxic fumes or inhaled poisons while your breathing is slowed. In addition, holding your breath for 1 minute only counts as 5 rounds of breath-holding.

Sudden Effort: You gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution (your choice) until your next turn. If you use this benefit more than once per day, you become fatigued. If you use this benefit while fatigued, you become exhausted.

Special: A wizard may select Body Awareness as a wizard bonus feat.

DEFENSIVE MAGIC [ARCANE]

In times of grave danger, you scavenge your spells for immediate protection.

Prerequisite: Arcane Focus.

Benefit: When you expend your arcane focus, you may select one of the following three benefits.

Absorb Damage: As an immediate action as part of expending your arcane focus, you may "lose" a prepared arcane spell or an arcane spell slot in exchange for temporary damage reduction. Until just before your next turn, you gain damage reduction equal to the level of the spell lost in this way. Thus, if you lose a 3rd-level spell, you gain DR 3/— until just before the start of your next turn.

Iron Magic: Each spell granting you an armor or shield bonus grants you an additional +2 armor or shield bonus until your next turn.

Protective Aura: As an immediate action as part of expending your arcane focus, you may dismiss one spell that you cast that currently affects you, such as *mage armor* or *fire shield*. In exchange, you receive an enhancement bonus equal to the level of the spell dismissed on the next saving throw you attempt within the next minute. For example, if you dismiss a *mage armor* spell you cast on yourself, you gain a +1 bonus to your next saving throw; if you dismiss *fire shield*, you gain a +4 bonus.

Special: A wizard may select Defensive Magic as a wizard bonus feat.

FOCUSED SPECIALIST [ARCANE]

Your intense concentration allows you to enhance a spell you cast from your school of specialization.

Prerequisites: Arcane Focus, specialist wizard level 1st.

Benefit: When you expend your arcane focus, you may select one of the following three benefits.

Spell Boost: The next spell you cast from the school you specialize in in the next round is cast at your spellcaster level +1.

Spell Endowment: The next spell you cast from the school you specialize in in the next round has its saving throw DC increased by +1. This bonus stacks with those from the Spell Focus and Improved Spell Focus feats.

Spell Intensity: The next spell you cast from the school you specialize in in the next round gains a +2 bonus on any level check made to overcome spell resistance.

Special: A wizard may select Focused Specialist as a wizard bonus feat.

MAGICAL INSIGHT [ARCANE]

Your clarity of mind allows you to study and interpret magic surrounding you.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Arcane Focus.

Benefit: When you expend your arcane focus, you may select one of the following three benefits.

Detection Enhancement: When you cast a divination spell that reveals information over the course of rounds of concentration (such as *detect magic, detect poison, detect thoughts*, and so on), you can expend your arcane focus to gain information on every target within range as if you had studied the target for one additional round.

Spell Interpretation: You gain a +4 insight bonus on all Spellcraft checks you make within a minute of expending your arcane focus.

Spell Lore: You gain a +4 insight bonus on the next Knowledge (arcana) check you make within a minute of expending your arcane focus.

Special: A wizard may select Magical Insight as a wizard bonus feat.

POTENT DWEOMERCRAFT [ARCANE]

You can spot the weaknesses of your opponents.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Arcane Focus, ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: When you expend your arcane focus, you may select one of the following three benefits.

Damaging Spell: The next melee touch attack spell you cast within the same round you expend your arcane focus deals 25% more damage.

Spell Critical: You double the threat range (19–20) of the next melee touch attack spell you cast within the same round you expend your arcane focus.

Weaving Strike: You gain a +2 competency bonus on the next melee touch attack you make with a spell. You must cast the spell within the same round you expend your arcane focus.

Special: A wizard may select Potent Dweomercraft as a wizard bonus feat.

by Amber E. Scott • illustrated by Peter Bergting

DIVINE

THE CLERIC GUIDE

This guide employs charts, rules clarifications, suggestions of appropriate feats and prestige classes, and rulebook references to enhance and ease the playability of cleric.

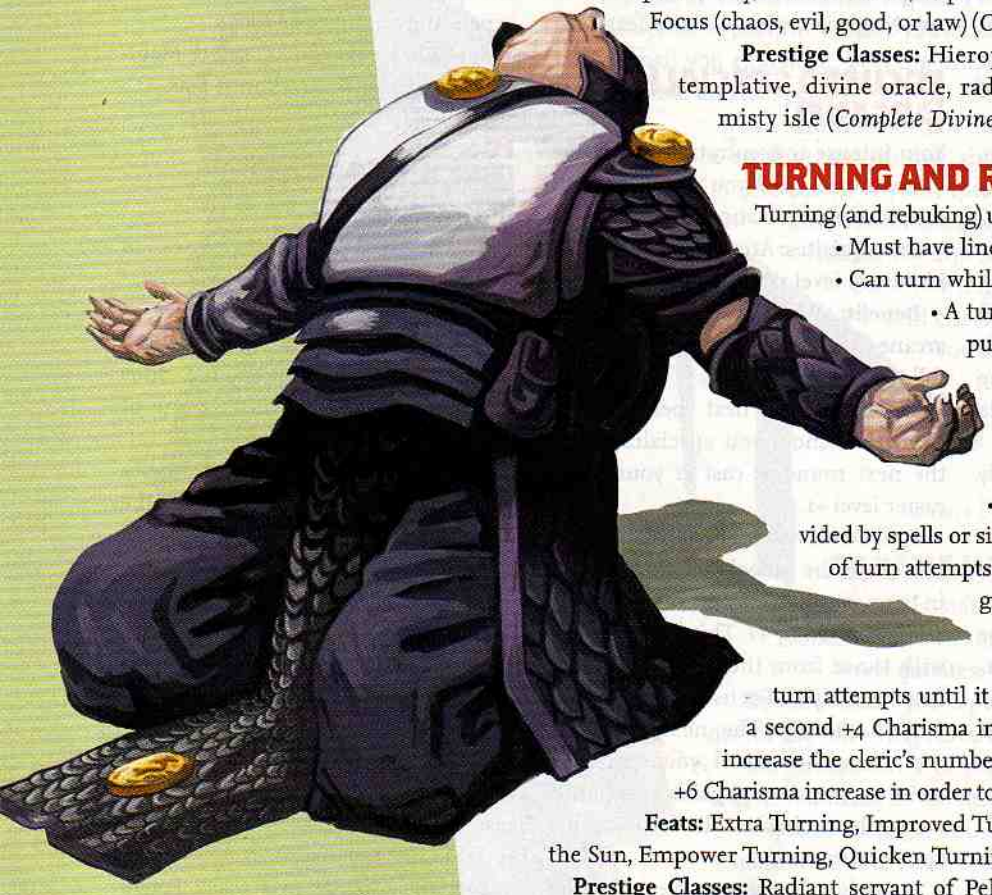
DIVINE CASTING

Clerics must abide by the following special rules concerning their spellcasting not found in other classes.

- A cleric chooses the time of day when he prepares spells. He cannot later change this time.
- If a cleric misses the appointed time, he must prepare his spells as soon as possible or wait until the next day.
- A cleric need not rest before preparing spells.
- A cleric's domain spells count as being on his spell list for purposes of activating magic items.

Feats: All metamagic feats; Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus, Greater Spell Penetration, Spell Focus, Spell Penetration (*Player's Handbook*); Consecrate Spell, Corrupt Spell, Divine Metamagic, Divine Spell Power, Domain Focus, Domain Spontaneity, Profane Boost, Rapid Spell, Reach Spell, Sacred Boost, Spell Focus (chaos, evil, good, or law) (*Complete Divine*).

Prestige Classes: Hierophant (*Dungeon Master's Guide*); contemplative, divine oracle, radiant servant of Pelor, seeker of the misty isle (*Complete Divine*).



TURNING AND REBUKING UNDEAD

Turning (and rebuking) undead has the following specific rules.

- Must have line of sight.
- Can turn while invisible or otherwise hidden.
- A turn attempt counts as an attack for the purpose of ending *invisibility*.
- Spending turn attempts to power divine feats or other effects might not count as attacks, depending on the effect generated.
- Temporary Charisma bonuses provided by spells or similar effects increase a cleric's number of turn attempts per day, but multiple instances do not grant multiple turn attempts: A temporary +4 Charisma increase (such as from *eagle's splendor*) grants two extra turn attempts until it ends. If those turn attempts are used, a second +4 Charisma increase later in the same day does not increase the cleric's number of turn attempts (he would require a +6 Charisma increase in order to gain a third extra turn attempt).

Feats: Extra Turning, Improved Turning (*Player's Handbook*); Disciple of the Sun, Empower Turning, Quicken Turning (*Complete Divine*).

Prestige Classes: Radiant servant of Pelor, sacred exorcist (*Complete Divine*); hunter of the dead (*Complete Warrior*).

TURNING

Turning Check: 1d20 + Charisma modifier

- +2 against undead if you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion)

Turning Check Result	Most Powerful Undead Affected (Maximum Hit Dice)
0 or lower	Cleric's level – 4
1–3	Cleric's level – 3
4–6	Cleric's level – 2
7–9	Cleric's level – 1
10–12	Cleric's level
13–15	Cleric's level + 1
16–18	Cleric's level + 2
19–21	Cleric's level + 3
22 or higher	Cleric's level + 4

Turning Damage: 2d6 + Charisma modifier + cleric level

ALIGNMENT AURA POWER

Cleric Level	Aura Power
1st	Faint
2nd–4th	Moderate
5th–10th	Strong
11th or higher	Overwhelming

CURING AND INFLICTING

Inflict spells follow the same rules of modification as *cure* spells.

- Converting a readied spell into a spontaneous *cure* spell requires no additional action beyond casting the spell.
- Spontaneous *cure* spells count as spontaneous spells when modified by metamagic feats.
- A spontaneous *cure* spell with a metamagic feat applied requires a full-round action (or longer) to cast.
- A cleric cannot sacrifice a domain spell or a spell from a class other than cleric to cast a spontaneous *cure* spell.
- Applying the Augment Healing feat to any *vigor* spell (from *Spell Compendium*) adds double the spell's level to the total healing provided. For example, an augmented *lesser vigor* (a 1st-level spell) grants an extra 2 points of healing in total. The simplest bookkeeping method is to allow the augmented *vigor* to grant the extra healing in the first round.

ERRATA

The following errata and clarifications (and more) are available on the Wizards of the Coast website, at **wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/rules**.

Feat

The errata for Divine Metamagic clarifies its intent.

Divine Metamagic (*Complete Divine*): Changes benefit to "When you take this feat, choose a metamagic feat that you have. This feat applies only to that metamagic feat. As a free action, you can take the energy from turning or rebuking undead and use it to apply a metamagic feat to divine spells that you know..."

Spells

Spells sometimes require clarification as the rules of the game evolve.

Bestow Curse, Greater (*Complete Divine*): Delete everything after "can have help accomplishing the task."

Blasphemy (*Player's Handbook*): Possesses a 40-foot range.

Chaos Hammer (*Player's Handbook*): Slowed creatures are affected as by the *slow* spell. Disregard text describing *slow* effect in *chaos hammer* description.

Cometfall (*Complete Divine*): Deals a maximum of 20d6 points of damage.

Divine Favor (*Player's Handbook*): Grants a maximum +3 bonus.

Probe Thoughts (*Complete Divine*): Saving throw becomes, "Will negates; see text."

Righteous Might (*Player's Handbook*): The spell causes you to grow, doubling your height and multiplying your weight by 8. This increase changes your size category to the next larger one, and you gain a +4 size bonus to Strength and a +2 size bonus to Constitution. You gain a +2 enhancement bonus to your natural armor. You gain damage reduction 3/evil (if you normally channel positive energy) or damage reduction 3/good (if you normally channel negative energy). At 12th level, this damage reduction becomes 6/evil or 6/good, and at 15th level it becomes 9/evil or 9/good (the maximum).

Righteous Wrath of the Faithful (*Complete Divine*): Replace "are affected as if they had received an *aid* spell, gaining" with "gain."

Scrying (*Player's Handbook*): If the subject fails the save, you can see and hear the subject and the subject's immediate surroundings.

Slime Wave (*Complete Divine*): Delete "for every 5 feet of its face" from the last sentence.

Feats: Augment Healing, Elemental Healing, Profane Boost, Sacred Boost, Sacred Healing (*Complete Divine*).

Prestige Classes: Hospitaler, radiant servant of Pelor (*Complete Divine*).

ALIGNMENT

Clerics have the following specific alignment restrictions based on their deities.

- Must be within one step of deity's alignment (lawful/chaotic or good/evil).
- Some deities note exceptions: St. Cuthbert (LN) only allows LG and LN clerics.
- Cannot be neutral on both axes unless deity is neutral on both axes.
- A cleric cannot cast a spell with an alignment descriptor opposed to his deity's alignment. A cleric cannot select an alignment domain (Chaos, Evil, Good, Law) unless he possesses the corresponding alignment, even if his deity offers that domain as a choice.
- A cleric always radiates an aura of his deity's alignment, regardless of his actual alignment. A cleric of a philosophy (rather than of a deity) who selects an alignment domain radiates an aura corresponding to that domain.

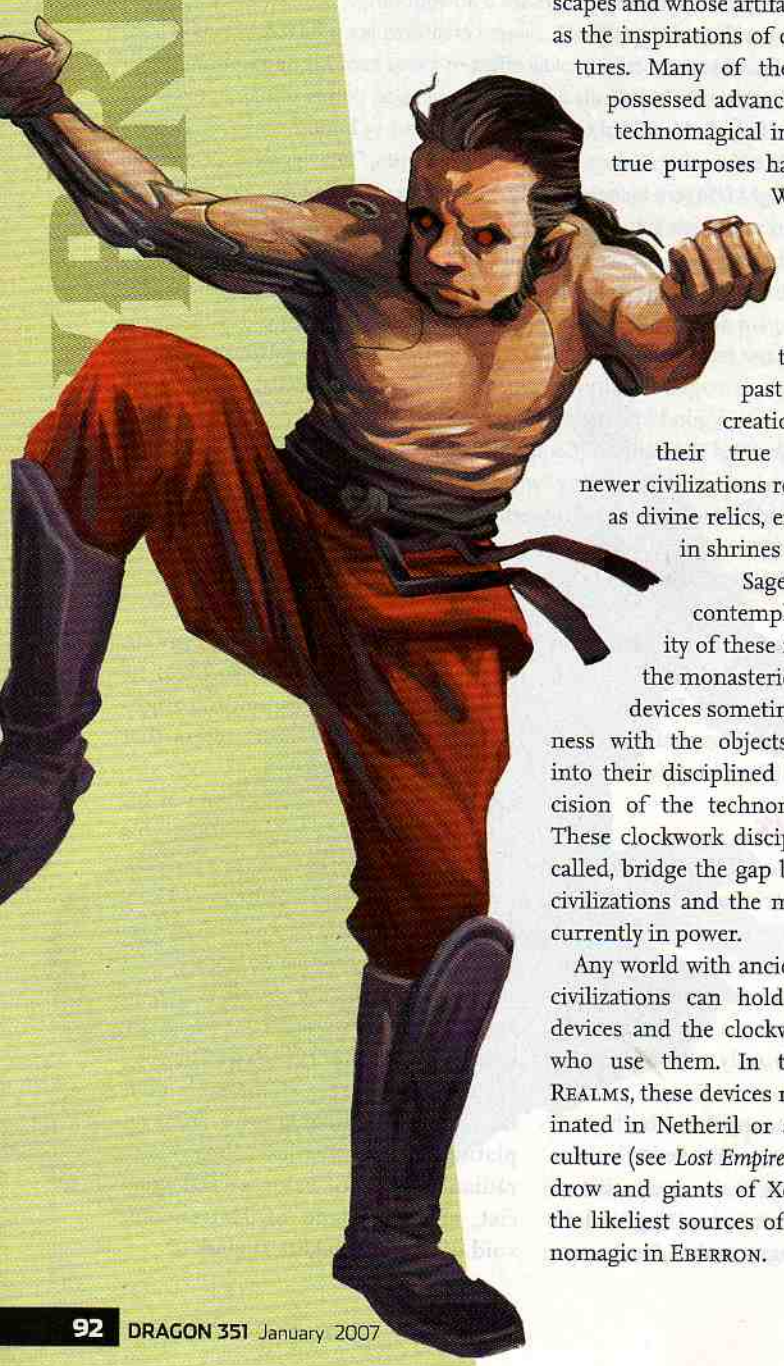
Feats: Consecrate Spell, Corrupt Spell, Spell Focus (chaos, evil, good, law), True Believer (*Complete Divine*).

Prestige Classes: Alienist, elemental savant (*Complete Arcane*); contemplative, entropomancer, hospitaler, radiant servant of Pelor, sacred exorcist, shining blade of Heironeous, void disciple (*Complete Divine*).

by Stephanie Vergamini • illustrated by Peter Bergting

The Clockwork Disciple

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."
—Arthur C. Clarke



Most D&D worlds contain ancient, lost civilizations whose ruins dot the landscapes and whose artifacts and relics act as the inspirations of countless adventures. Many of these civilizations possessed advanced clockwork or technomagical inventions whose true purposes have disappeared. When new civilizations rise, antiquarians and adventurers exploring the ruins of the past recover these creations. Unsure of their true purposes, the newer civilizations revere such items as divine relics, ensconcing them in shrines and temples.

Sages and monks contemplate the divinity of these items. Monks of the monasteries housing these devices sometimes achieve oneness with the objects, incorporating into their disciplined bodies the precision of the technomagical devices. These clockwork disciples, as they are called, bridge the gap between the lost civilizations and the modern societies currently in power.

Any world with ancient ruins or lost civilizations can hold technomagical devices and the clockwork disciplines who use them. In the FORGOTTEN REALMS, these devices might have originated in Netheril or another ancient culture (see *Lost Empires of Faerûn*). The drow and giants of Xen'drik serve as the likeliest sources of forgotten technomagic in EBERRON.

TECHNOMAGICAL IMPLANT [GENERAL]

You can place small pieces of technology into your body, which grant a variety of results.

Prerequisites: Con 13, character level 3rd.

Benefit: You may gain technomagical implants. Minor implants are small colored disks or chips of metal usually no more than a couple inches long, with tiny, barely visible inner workings of gears and springs. Minor implants install directly beneath the skin, requiring a DC 20 Spot check to notice them (implants concealed by clothing or armor cannot be seen in this way).

A major implant is a colored disk or rod of metal usually no more than a foot long, with tiny, barely visible inner workings of gears and springs. A major implant installs into your flesh (usually with some part of it protruding from the skin), requiring a DC 10 Spot check to notice it (an implant concealed by clothing or armor cannot be seen in this way).

Because of its size and potency, a technomagical implant takes up a body slot as a magic item of the appropriate type. All implants, minor and major, are compatible with each other and their bonuses stack where applicable.

The ability to create the technology found in implants no longer exists among the mortal races of the world, so the only way to acquire them is as treasure (hence their gp values). Note that taking this feat does not grant you possession of any implants. You must find them as a part of treasure.

You may install as many technomagical implants as you can find, as long as you do not violate the rules governing magic item slots.

Special: A monk may gain Technomagical Implant as her 6th-level monk bonus feat.

TECHNOMAGICAL DEVICES

The most commonly discovered implants include the following.

Arcane Deflection: Up to three times per day spells and magical effects that target you have a 25% of rebounding back at their caster, as a *ring of spell turning*. Value: 17,275 gp.

Cheetah's Swiftness: Your base land speed increases by +5 feet. Value: 2,062 gp.

Darkeye Lenses: You are immune to blindness effects and gain a +2 enhancement bonus on saving throws made to resist gaze attacks. Value: 22,500 gp.

Divine Body: When this technomagical implant is discovered, roll 1d6. On a 1–2 it is attuned to Strength, 3–4 to Dexterity, and 5–6 to Constitution. You gain a +1 inherent bonus to the ability score to which the technomagical implant is attuned. Value: 20,625 gp.

Divine Mind: When this technomagical implant is discovered, roll 1d6. On a 1–2 it is attuned to Intelligence, 3–4 to Wisdom, and 5–6 to Charisma. You gain a +1 inherent bonus to the ability score to which the technomagical implant is attuned. Value: 20,625 gp.

Farseer: You gain a +3 competence bonus on Spot and Search checks. Value: 1,350 gp.

Fleshbound Steelscales: You gain a +1 enhancement bonus to your natural armor. Value: 1,500 gp.

Force-Blast Generator: You can create an invisible explosion of force in a 10-foot-radius sphere, centered on you. This explosion of force makes a bull rush attempt against every creature within 10 feet of you, with a bonus equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. Value: 6,450 gp.

COMMON TECHNOMAGICAL IMPLANTS

Implant	Power	Body Slot	Value
Quickdisk	Minor	Necklace	1,000 gp
Farseer	Minor	Eye lenses	1,350 gp
Fleshbound Steelscales	Major	Vest	1,500 gp
Shockrod	Major	Bracers	1,500 gp
Cheetah's Swiftness	Minor	Boots	2,062 gp
Master's Edge	Minor	Headband	3,000 gp
Tremorsense Disk	Major	Boots	4,000 gp
Levitation Pads	Minor	Boots	5,625 gp
Force-Blast Generator	Major	Headband	6,450 gp
Arcane Deflection	Major	Vest	17,275 gp
Divine Body	Major	Bracers or boots	20,625 gp
Divine Mind	Major	Headband	20,625 gp
Shocking Field, Lesser	Minor	Vest	21,000 gp
Darkeye Lenses	Major	Eye lenses	22,500 gp
Shocking Field, Greater	Major	Vest	42,000 gp

Levitation Pads: You may *levitate*, as the spell, at will. Value: 5,625 gp.

Master's Edge: You gain a +2 bonus on a skill. When you find this kind of implant, the DM must determine which skill it offers its bonus on. Value: 3,000 gp.

Quickdisk: You gain a +2 bonus on all initiative checks. Value: 1,000 gp.

Shocking Field, Greater: Whenever a creature strikes you with a melee attack, it takes 1d4 points of electricity damage and must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC equals 1/2 your character level, + your Con modifier) to avoid being stunned for 1 round. A creature that strikes with a reach weapon does not take this damage. You cannot have both a greater and lesser shocking field installed. Value: 42,000 gp.

Shocking Field, Lesser: Whenever a creature strikes you with a melee attack, it takes 1d4 points of electricity damage. A creature that strikes with a reach weapon does not take this damage. You cannot have both a greater and lesser shocking field installed. Value: 21,000 gp.

Shockrod: Whenever you make a melee touch attack or an unarmed strike, your attack deals an extra 1d6 points of electricity damage. You take half that amount in nonlethal damage. Value: 1,500 gp.

Tremorsense Disk: You gain tremorsense to a range of 20 feet. Value: 4,000 gp.

NEW TECHNOMAGICAL IMPLANTS

While characters cannot hope to create new technomagical devices used as implants, your DM should feel free to create new ones. All technomagical implants are priced as magic items with a 25% price reduction, because a character must take a feat to gain the use of one.

Your DM might require a ritual or procedure for your character to gain a new technomagical implant. The details of such are left to the DM, but they should not cost a gold.

VARIANT CLASS FEATURE

The following class feature reflects a monk who understands—on some level—the powerful relics of the past.

BANE OF THE CLOCKWORK

Due to your knowledge of all things constructed from metal and coils, you are intimately aware of a construct's flaws.

Level: 3rd.

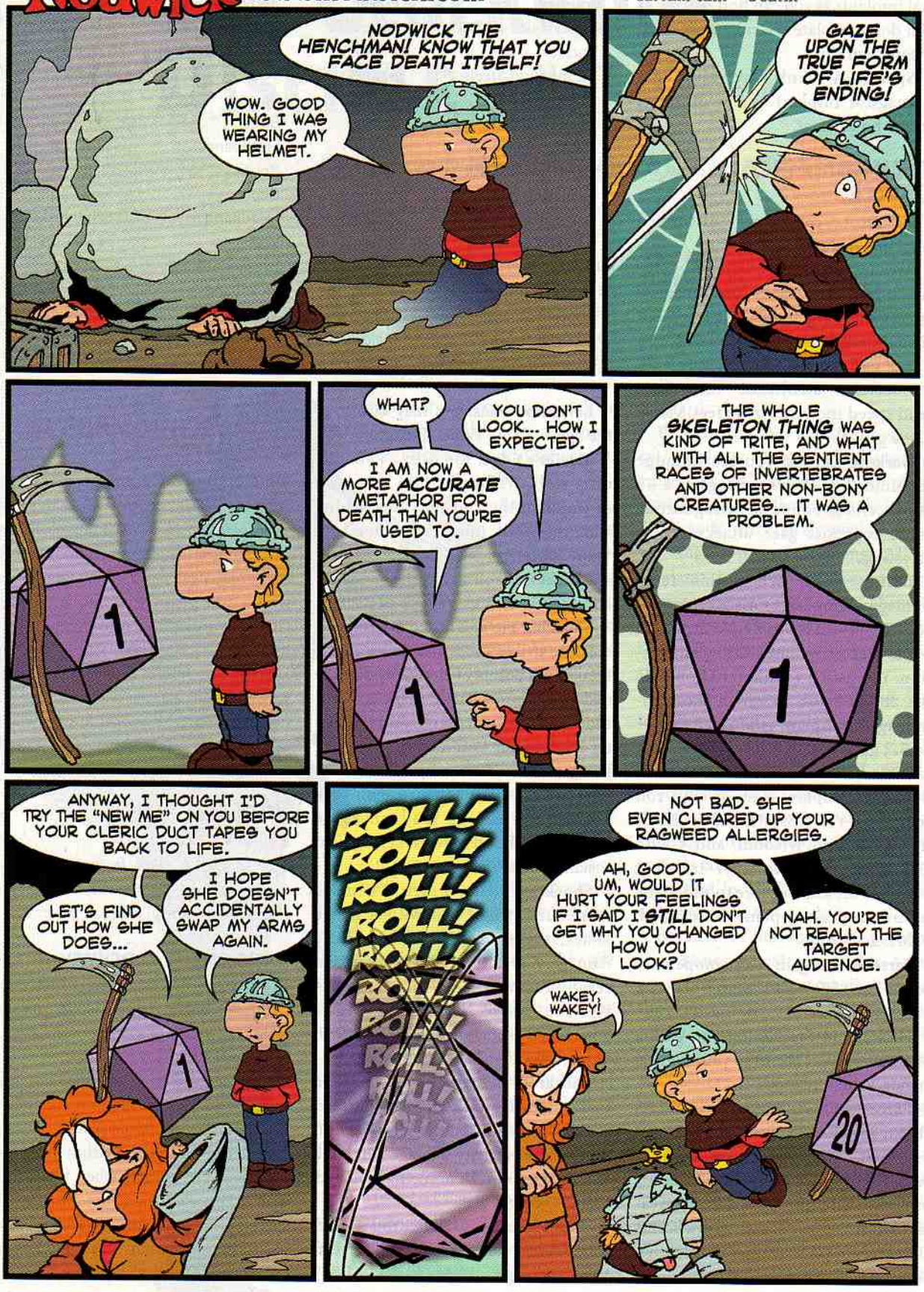
Replaces: If you select this class feature, you never gain the slow fall ability, nor your 6th-level bonus feat.

Benefit: You can deal critical hit damage against constructs when you attack with unarmed strikes (not with monk special weapons). Constructs are no longer immune to your Stunning Fist or quivering palm attacks.

Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

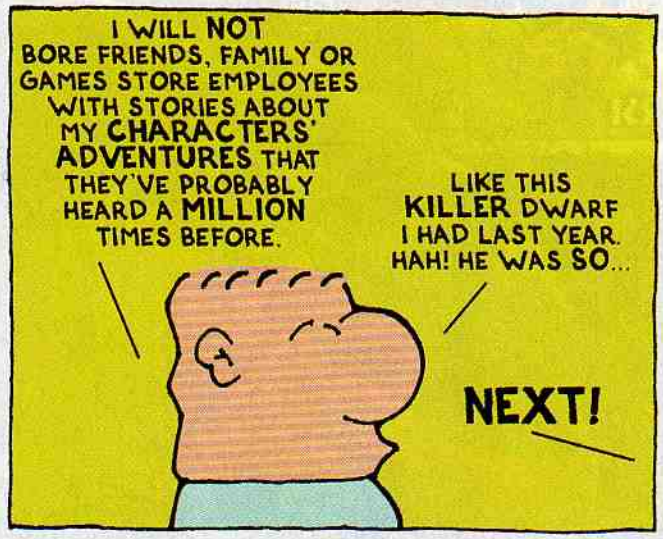
"All the world's a stage..." -Shakespeare
"Curtain call." -Death.

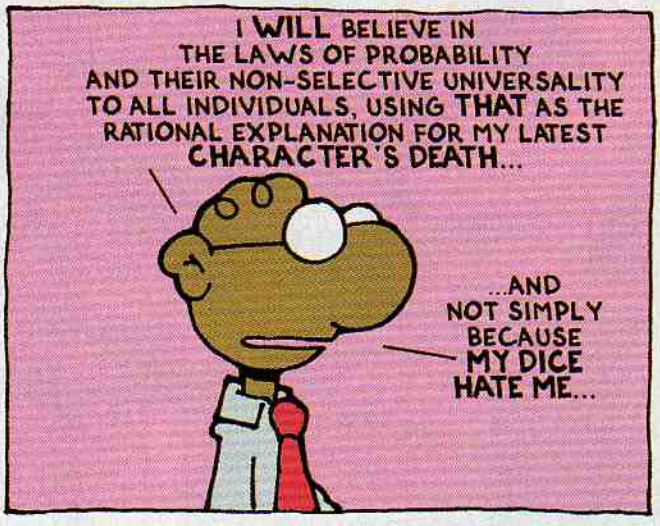

NODWICK THE HENCHMAN! KNOW THAT YOU FACE DEATH ITSELF!
WOW. GOOD THING I WAS WEARING MY HELMET.
GAZE UPON THE TRUE FORM OF LIFE'S ENDING!
WHAT?
YOU DON'T LOOK... HOW I EXPECTED.
I AM NOW A MORE ACCURATE METAPHOR FOR DEATH THAN YOU'RE USED TO.
THE WHOLE SKELETON THING WAS KIND OF TRITE, AND WHAT WITH ALL THE SENTIENT RACES OF INVERTEBRATES AND OTHER NON-BONY CREATURES... IT WAS A PROBLEM.
ANYWAY, I THOUGHT I'D TRY THE "NEW ME" ON YOU BEFORE YOUR CLERIC DUCT TAPES YOU BACK TO LIFE.
LET'S FIND OUT HOW SHE DOES...
I HOPE SHE DOESN'T ACCIDENTALLY SWAP MY ARMS AGAIN.
ROLL! ROLL! ROLL! ROLL! ROLL!
NOT BAD. SHE EVEN CLEARED UP YOUR RAGWEED ALLERGIES.
AH, GOOD. UM, WOULD IT HURT YOUR FEELINGS IF I SAID I STILL DON'T GET WHY YOU CHANGED HOW YOU LOOK?
NAH. YOU'RE NOT REALLY THE TARGET AUDIENCE.
WAKEY, WAKEY!

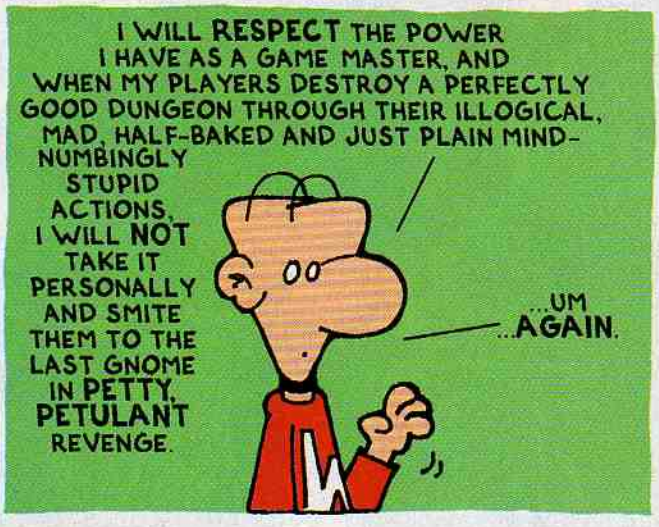
DORK TOWER®

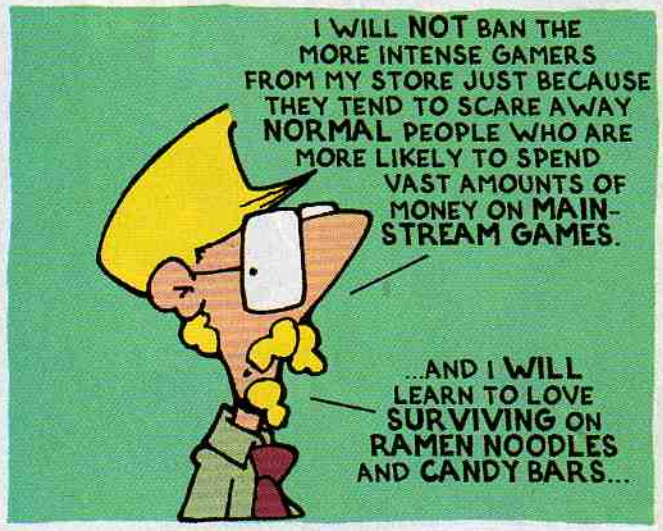
By JOHN KOVALIC

GAMER New Year Resolutions!


I WILL NOT BORE FRIENDS, FAMILY OR GAMES STORE EMPLOYEES WITH STORIES ABOUT MY CHARACTERS' ADVENTURES THAT THEY'VE PROBABLY HEARD A MILLION TIMES BEFORE.
LIKE THIS KILLER DWARF I HAD LAST YEAR. HAH! HE WAS SO...
NEXT!


I WILL BELIEVE IN THE LAWS OF PROBABILITY AND THEIR NON-SELECTIVE UNIVERSALITY TO ALL INDIVIDUALS, USING THAT AS THE RATIONAL EXPLANATION FOR MY LATEST CHARACTER'S DEATH...
...AND NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE MY DICE HATE ME...


I WILL RESPECT THE POWER I HAVE AS A GAME MASTER, AND WHEN MY PLAYERS DESTROY A PERFECTLY GOOD DUNGEON THROUGH THEIR ILLOGICAL, MAD, HALF-BAKED AND JUST PLAIN MIND-NUMBINGLY STUPID ACTIONS, I WILL NOT TAKE IT PERSONALLY AND SMITE THEM TO THE LAST GNOME IN PETTY, PETULANT REVENGE.
...UM ...AGAIN.


I WILL NOT BAN THE MORE INTENSE GAMERS FROM MY STORE JUST BECAUSE THEY TEND TO SCARE AWAY NORMAL PEOPLE WHO ARE MORE LIKELY TO SPEND VAST AMOUNTS OF MONEY ON MAIN-STREAM GAMES.
...AND I WILL LEARN TO LOVE SURVIVING ON RAMEN NOODLES AND CANDY BARS...

THIS YEAR I RESOLVE TO TAKE BRUTAL REVENGE ON ALL THE MONSTERS THAT TORMENT MY FIFTH LEVEL THIEF, ENDANGERING HIS LIFE AT EVERY TURN.
IN OTHER WORDS, THE REST OF MY PARTY...
HEY!
WHOOPS! LOOKS — LIKE WE'VE RUN OUT OF SPACE, FOLKS!
KOVALIC

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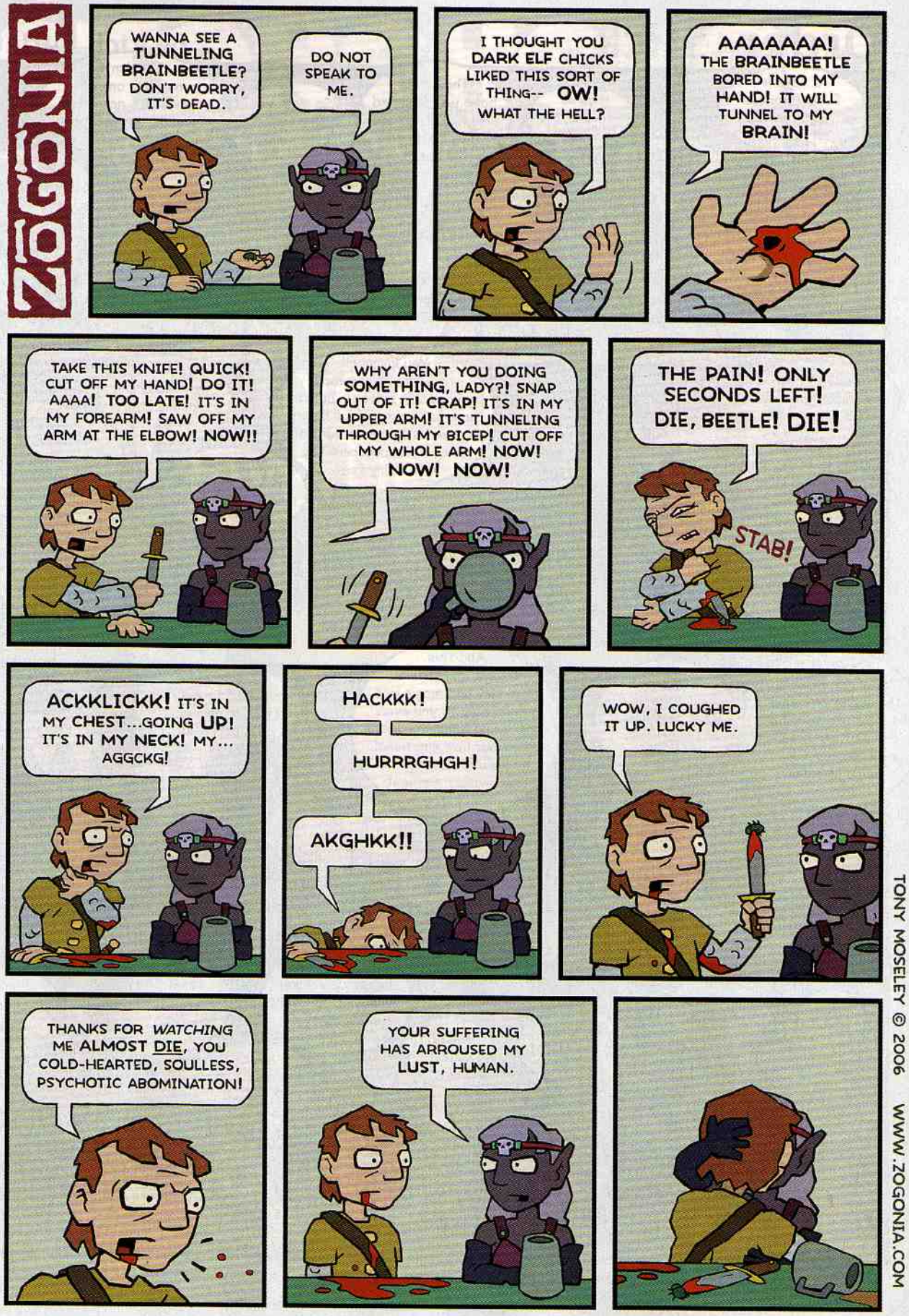
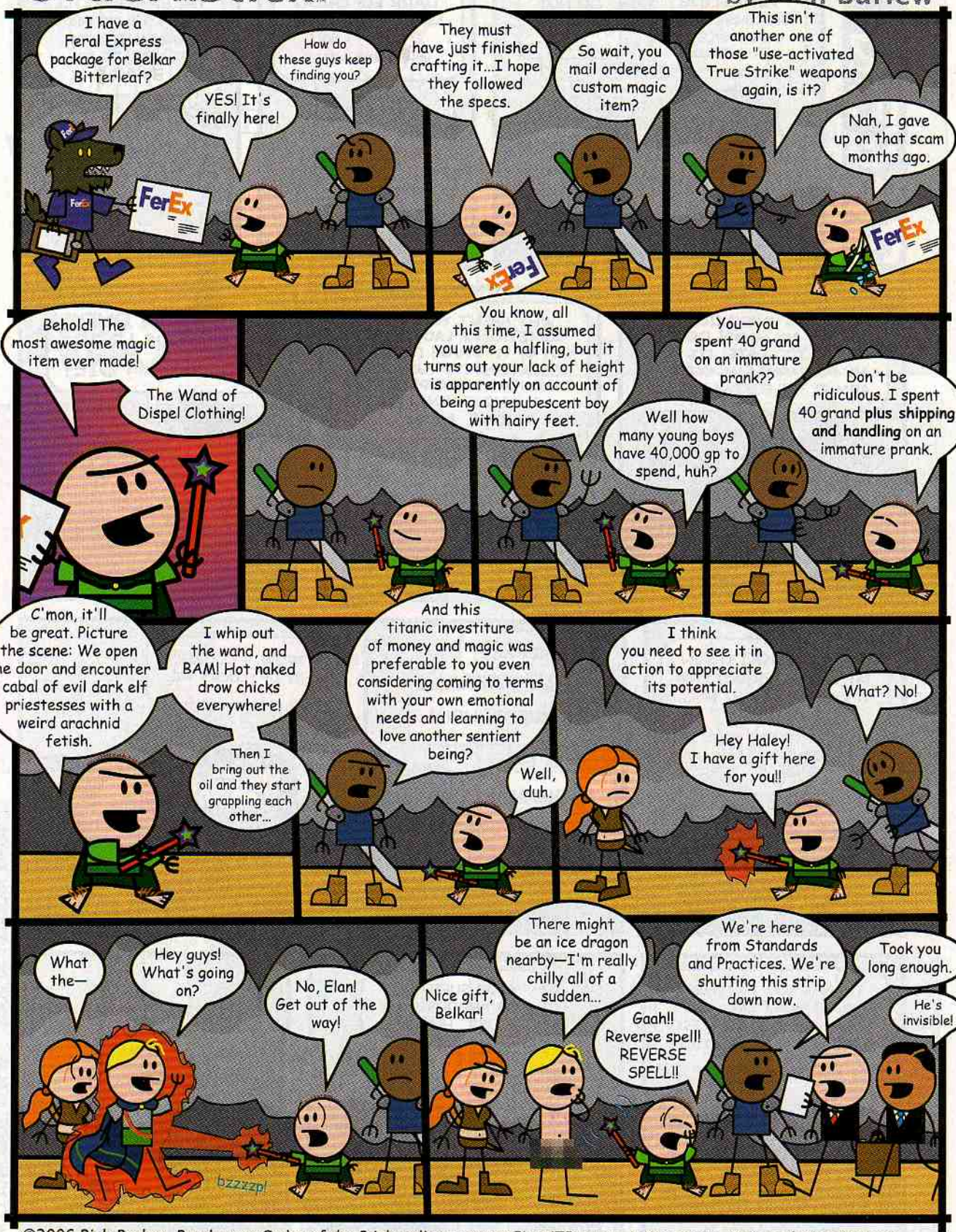
HTTP://WWW.LIVEJOURNAL.COM/USERS/MUSKRAT_JOHN


ZOGONIA
WANNA SEE A TUNNELING BRAINBEETLE? DON'T WORRY, IT'S DEAD.
DO NOT SPEAK TO ME.
I THOUGHT YOU DARK ELF CHICKS LIKED THIS SORT OF THING-- OW! WHAT THE HELL?
AAAAAAA! THE BRAINBEETLE BORED INTO MY HAND! IT WILL TUNNEL TO MY BRAIN!
TAKE THIS KNIFE! QUICK! CUT OFF MY HAND! DO IT! AAAA! TOO LATE! IT'S IN MY FOREARM! SAW OFF MY ARM AT THE ELBOW! NOW!!
WHY AREN'T YOU DOING SOMETHING, LADY?! SNAP OUT OF IT! CRAP! IT'S IN MY UPPER ARM! IT'S TUNNELING THROUGH MY BICEP! CUT OFF MY WHOLE ARM! NOW! NOW! NOW!
THE PAIN! ONLY SECONDS LEFT! DIE, BEETLE! DIE!
STAB!
ACKKLICKK! IT'S IN MY CHEST...GOING UP! IT'S IN MY NECK! MY... AGGCKG!
HACKKK!
HURRRGHGH!
AKGHKK!!
WOW, I COUGHED IT UP. LUCKY ME.
THANKS FOR *WATCHING* ME ALMOST DIE, YOU COLD-HEARTED, SOULLESS, PSYCHOTIC ABOMINATION!
YOUR SUFFERING HAS ARROUSED MY LUST, HUMAN.

TONY MOSELEY © 2006 WWW.ZOGONIA.COM

The Order of the Stick™

by Rich Burlew


I have a Feral Express package for Belkar Bitterleaf?
YES! It's finally here!
How do these guys keep finding you?
They must have just finished crafting it...I hope they followed the specs.
So wait, you mail ordered a custom magic item?
This isn't another one of those "use-activated True Strike" weapons again, is it?
Nah, I gave up on that scam months ago.
FerEx
Behold! The most awesome magic item ever made!
The Wand of Dispel Clothing!
You know, all this time, I assumed you were a halfling, but it turns out your lack of height is apparently on account of being a prepubescent boy with hairy feet.
Well how many young boys have 40,000 gp to spend, huh?
You—you spent 40 grand on an immature prank??
Don't be ridiculous. I spent 40 grand plus shipping and handling on an immature prank.
C'mon, it'll be great. Picture the scene: We open the door and encounter a cabal of evil dark elf priestesses with a weird arachnid fetish.
I whip out the wand, and BAM! Hot naked drow chicks everywhere!
Then I bring out the oil and they start grappling each other...
And this titanic investiture of money and magic was preferable to you even considering coming to terms with your own emotional needs and learning to love another sentient being?
Well, duh.
I think you need to see it in action to appreciate its potential.
Hey Haley! I have a gift here for you!!
What? No!
What the—
Hey guys! What's going on?
No, Elan! Get out of the way!
bzzzzp!
Nice gift, Belkar!
There might be an ice dragon nearby—I'm really chilly all of a sudden...
Gaah!! Reverse spell! REVERSE SPELL!!
We're here from Standards and Practices. We're shutting this strip down now.
He's invisible!
Took you long enough.

©2006 Rich Burlew Read more Order of the Stick online at www.GiantITP.com. It Was Just a Matter of Time Anyway

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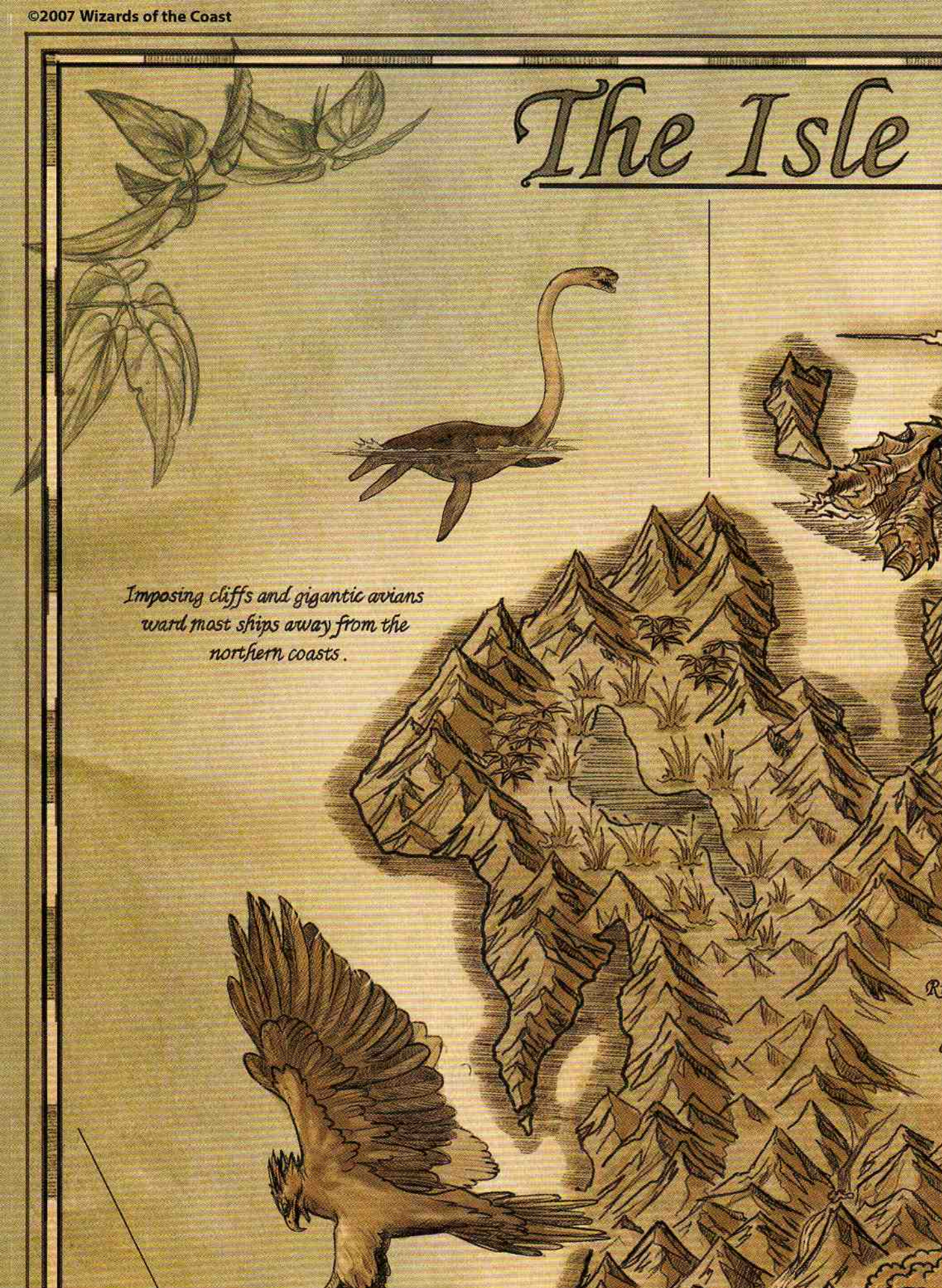

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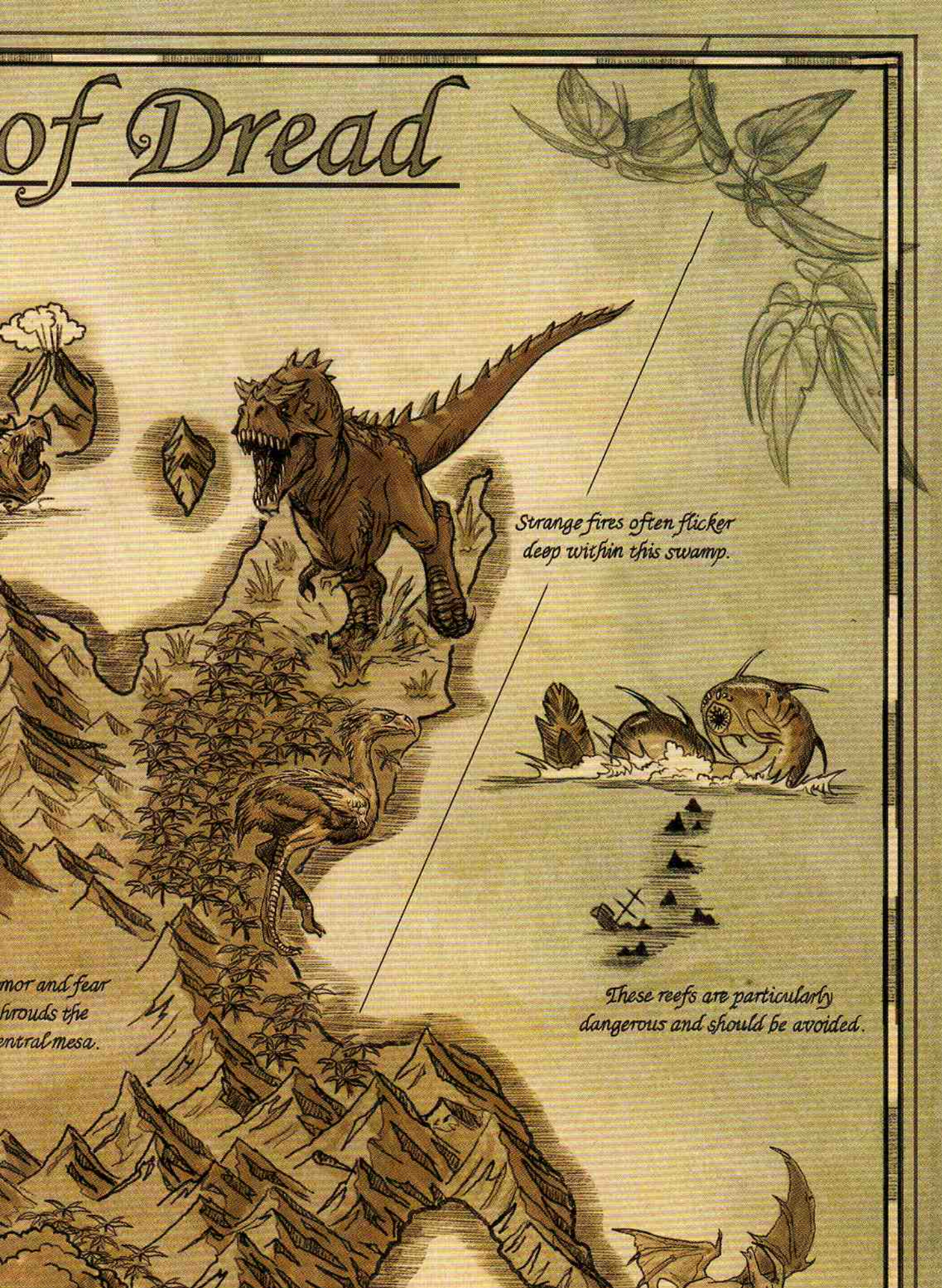

Strange fires often flicker deep within this swamp.

These reefs are particularly dangerous and should be avoided.

mor and fear hrouds the entral mesa.

Abandoned buildings can
be seen along this island's coast
They don't look Olman.
N
6 miles
6 miles

ing made the wall's
ose more apparent
venturing beyond it.
Farshore